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Threatned to
ISRAEL,
AND
GODS CALL
To Weeping and to Mourning.
BEING
TWO SERMONS
PREACHED
On the Fast Day, *Novemb.* 13. 1678.
AND
On the Fast Day, *April* 11. 1679.

By JAMES BROME, A.M. Rector of *Cheriton* in the County of *Kent*.

LONDON,
Printed by *M. Clark*, for *Richard Chiswel*, at the *Rose* and *Crown* in S. *Pauls* Church-yard. 1679.

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Howey 8/17/44
Plain

To the Right Worſhipful

JAMES BROCKMAN, Esq;

My moſt honoured Friend and Patron;

And his Vertuous Conſort

Madam LUCY BROCKMAN.

THeſe Sermons finding ſo favourable an acceptance at your hands, and being ſo generally deſired and called for by all the neighbourhood, I thought it my duty to proſtrate them both at your feet, and uſher them out into light under your moſt auſpicious Patronage.

Theſe perillous Times into which we are fallen, as they call for a ſerious Humiliation on all ſides, ſo do they command our joint-endeavours to promote it; and if I can be any way inſtrumental to this good work in the publication of theſe Papers; as it is the utmoſt of

my design, so likewise of my desire; unless it be further to give hereby a testimony of my real gratitude for the manifold favours so frequently conferred, since I had the honour to be under your wings, upon

Your most obliged Servant.

James Brome.

The

The Famine of the Word

Threatned to

ISRAEL, &c.

SERMON I.

AMOS viij. Verſ. 11, 12.

Behold, the days come, ſaith the Lord God, that I will ſend a Famine in the Land; not a Famine of Bread, nor thirſt for Water, but Hearing the Words of the Lord.

And they ſhall wander from Sea to Sea, and from the North, even to the Eaſt, they ſhall run to and fro to ſeek the Word of the Lord, and ſhall not find it.

IT was ever an act of great mercy and kindneſs in the God of Heaven and Earth, that he never iſſued out his Judgments in the World, but he gave timely notice of them before their approaches, to awaken mens Conſciences, either by timely Repentance to divert them, or elſe by Vigilancy and Prayer to prepare againſt them.

I might give you ſundry inſtances that this is the certain method of Gods proceeding with mankind. Thus before he deſtroyed the Old World, and waſhed away their pollutions by the general Inundation, *Noah*, the *Preacher*

ober of Righteouſneſs, was the Harbinger of that news, and he forewarned them what would follow their continual diſobedience, and perſeverance in Iniquity. After the ſame manner did he deal with *Sodom*, with *Gomorrah*, and with *Niniveh*.

But I need look ſo far back; *Iſrael* a people of Gods own chooſing, had ſufficient experience of his loving kindneſs, and patience, and forbearance in this particular. Though that Generation of men were a ſort of people ſo refractory and ſtubborn, ſo ſtiff-necked and diſobedient, ſo unſufferably wicked, and ſuch notorious tranſgreſſours, that God might in juſtice have ſwept them away with the *Beeſom of Deſtruction*, without giving them the leaſt ſpace of time to conſider of their ways, or amend their doings; I ſay, though he might have opened all the treaſuries of his Vengeance, and ſent down his arrows in great numbers upon their heads by reaſon of their manifold provocations againſt him; yet did he never do this, but firſt by his Prophets and Meſſengers forwarned them of what would happen: he did not ſtrike till he dealt with them as the Angel did with *Balaam*, open their eyes that they might ſee the blow was coming; he did not proceed to ſentence till he had firſt convicted them, and repreſented their guilt in a true Mirrour before them; he did not make them examples of his Juſtice, till he had firſt declared what it was had provoked him, and what ſuch wilful provocations did deſerve at his hands: thus did God ſtill temper his Mercy with his Juſtice, forewarn them, that they might be fore-armed. And for this very end and purpoſe was this precaution which God gave *Iſrael* in the words read unto you, *Behold, the days come, ſaith the Lord God, that I will ſend a Famine in the Land, not a Famine of Bread, nor a Thirſt of Water, but Hearing the Words of the Lord*, &c.

Numb. 22. 31.

From which words I ſhall diſcourſe:

1. Of the Nature of that Judgment which is here threat-

threatned to *Iſrael*, and ſhew you the dreadfulneſs of it. *It is a Famine, but not of Bread, nor of Thirſt for Water, but Hearing the Words of the Lord.*

2. I ſhall conſider the reaſon of this denunciation, what was the ground and original of it; and what it was that cauſed God Almighty to threaten that people with ſo ſevere a Judgment.

3. I ſhall endeavour to ſhew how they might, and we may prevent the like Judgment, which ſeems at this time to hang over our heads.

1. I begin with the firſt of theſe, the Nature of that Judgment which is here threatned to *Iſrael*, 'tis *Famine*. A ſore Judgment indeed, the very name of which is ſufficiently dreadful and terrible, were it but onely a corporal puniſhment. For if by Famine the Prophet had only meant ſcarcity of Bread, or extream want of Victuals, ſuch a Famine as hapned in *Canaan* in the Patriarch *Jacobs* days; or ſuch a Famine as fell upon *Samaria* in the days of *Eliſha*, when an Aſſes head was ſold for fourſcore pieces of ſilver, and the fourth part of a Kab of Doves dung for five pieces of ſilver, that indeed would have been a ſore evil, by the fearful effects that would have followed and enſued upon it. For to ſee men and women fainting for lack of Bread, and ready to prey upon and devour each other, to hear their Children and Sucklings, rending the Skies with their bitter ejulations, and crying to their Mothers, Where is Corn and Wine? whileſt their ſouls were ready to be poured forth in their Mothers boſom; nay, to behold women eating the fruit of their own wombs, and children become a feaſt to their Mothers that newly bore them, as it hath hapned many times through the extremity of hunger; this muſt needs be a very doleful calamity which would grieve the heart, and afflict the eyes of all ſuch as did behold it.

Gen. 43. 1.

2 Kings 6. 25.

Lament. 2. 11, 12.

2 Kings 6. 28.

And yet this corporal Famine, though to us it appears to be the greateſt of Evils, is nothing to that Famine which

is here threatned to *Israel*, which was the *Famine of Hearing the Words of the Lord*, or the ſcarcity and want of Heavenly Bread, by depriving them of all holy Ordinances and Duties. For certainly, this is meant, when God threatens to ſend a Famine amongſt them, that is, utterly to ſubvert the whole Jewiſh Church and Religion, to baniſh them from his Temple, and all their legal ſacrifices, to deprive them of all their Rites, and Ceremonies, and Sacraments, which were moſt dear and pretious to them, take from them the Law, with which before he had entruſted them, and to divorce and ſeparate them from their Prieſts and their Prophets, who were the true and Orthodox Expounders of it. All this is implied by the Famine of the Word. And ſo the Judgment will appear indeed to be very dreadful and terrible, upon theſe three accounts.

1. Becauſe all entercourſe and communion was likely to be cut off betwixt God and them.

2. Becauſe by this means they would be reduced to a very deplorable condition, in relation to their ſouls, by being deprived of all ſuch means as ſhould be moſt beneficial and advantagious to them.

3. Becauſe this commonly being the laſt of Judgments, for God to deprive them totally of his worſhip, muſt needs be moſt fatal and pernicious to them.

1. By this means all entercourſe and communion was likely to be cut off betwixt God and them. As it was the greateſt of honours to the Jewiſh Nation, that they were ſeparated from the reſt of the World as a People peculiar to God, to whom he was pleaſed very frequently to make greater manifeſtations of his love and favour than to any other community of mankind throughout the face of the Earth; ſo was it ſtill a further enhanſment of their glory, that God was pleaſed to chooſe their Metropolis *Jeruſalem*, as his own City, and in that to accept of a Temple, where he took delight to be called upon and worſhiped, rather

rather than elsewhere; for *at Salem was his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Sion*; that Temple was his Mansion house and habitation, *whither the Tribes went up, the Tribes of the Lord unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.* Psal. 76. 2. Psal. 122. 4.

But now when once their provocations were grown so high, and their sins and iniquities were risen to that degree, as to enforce him to abominate both them and their Temple, and make him loath and reject both them and their Religion, what farther hopes could they have of any favour, or of any entercourse and communion betwixt God and them? In vain was it for them to expect that God should any longer strive to endear them by any former familiar ways of kindness, when he was resolved to abandon both them, and their Worship; and all their Incense, and their Sacrifices became very loathsome and detestable in his sight. For Religion being the Cement, the Ligament, the chief Bond of Union and Communion betwixt God and Man; when that is once broken, or dissolved, farewel to Gods love, to his favour and friendship; no longer doth God regard any persons than they are kept close to him, by the firm ties of Duty and Obedience. And therefore in this respect a Judgment of this Nature to banish men from his Altars, to deprive them of his Ordinances, and not to suffer them any longer to tread within his Courts; I say, such a Judgment of Famine must needs appear very terrible, because when God rejects men as his Worshippers, he rejects them likewise for being his Favourites; and no longer than they continue in his Church or in his service, must they expect any communion or any friendship from him.

2. Secondly this Judgment was the more dreadful, because by this means *Israel* was like to be reduced to a very deplorable condition in relation to their souls, by being deprived of all such means as should be most advantagious to them.

As the Jews were happy in all manner of bleſſings, ſo were they in that great bleſſing which God was pleaſed to beſtow upon them, by ſending them his Meſſengers early and late to inſtruct them. Theſe perſons were ſometimes called *Seers*, and ſometimes *Prophets*, and ſometimes *Prieſts*, but all declared unto them the will of God, and expounded to them the Law and the Teſtimony: to theſe therefore the people had recourſe in all doubts, in all ſtraits, in all emergencies, and by them all their ſcruples were ſolved, and their ignorance diſpelled, and their duty plainly taught and reiterated to them.

But now by this Famine they were like to loſe all theſe, God was reſolved to take away their Prophets from them, to ſuffer their Rabbies and Doctors of the Law no longer to inſtruct them: and then what do we think could follow, but a Night of Ignorance and Error? what could we expect from them, when theſe lights were put out, but that, like their Neighbours round about them, they ſhould all be invelop'd with the dark miſts of Superſtition and Idolatry? though their *Prieſts lips did preſerve knowledge*, yet if they were not permitted to ſeek it at their mouths, they muſt needs grow ſtupid and ignorant, fooliſh and extravagant, abominable and diſobedient, and *unto every good work reprobate*, ἀδόκιμοι, fitleſs, and unfaſhionable.

Mal. 2. 7.

Titus 1. 16.

But this is not all, for they were not only like to be deprived of thoſe perſons who expounded the Law, but of the Law it ſelf, with all its Worſhip and Sacrifices; and that ſtill enhanſeth further the grievouſneſs of this Judgment: not to have their Prieſts left amongſt them was a great loſs, but to be deprived of Gods Word too, was the greateſt Judgment could light upon them; for now their ſouls were like to periſh for want of food, Gods Word being nutriment to the Soul as Bread is to the Body; and that being ſubtracted and taken away from them which ſhould nouriſh them up unto eternal life, the means ceaſing

ſing, the end could never be obtained; and ſo by conſequence the Soul was not onely like to ſtarve here, but to periſh hereafter too, and to lie down in woe and ſorrow to all eternity. A ſad Judgment indeed! that God ſhould ſubtract from them all means whereby to render themſelves happy, that he ſhould ſnatch them from their Prieſts, rend them from his Altars, and by taking the light of his Word from them likewiſe, condemn them to a far greater than Egyptian darkneſs; this ſtill renders it more grievous and dreadful.

3. But there is a third aggravation of it ſtill behind, That this is the laſt of Judgments which God uſually makes uſe of, when mens iniquities are ripe and ready for deſtruction, to deprive them of his true Worſhip, and to remove their Candleſtick out of his ſight.

He that can calculate in how many inſtances Humane Nature is paſſive, may quickly make an eſtimate of *Iſraels* calamities, which were ſo manifold and terrible, that God Almighty might have ſeemed even to have emptied his Magazine of Judgments, and to have diſcharged them all upon the Jewiſh race. In all the Hiſtory of former Ages, and places, there is no where to be met with all any Generation of Mankind, with whom God had ſo many controverſies, and upon whom he did pour down his hotteſt fury and diſpleaſure dreſt up in ſuch various and diſmal ſhapes, as he did upon this ſtubborn and incorrigible people. There was not any manner of Judgment but the Jews were acquainted with; and our Prophet *Amos* reckons up a whole Catalogue of ſufferings, which ſucceeded one another in that rebellious Nation. He tells us that God did not only cleanneſs of teeth in all their Cities, and want of Bread in all places, and with-held the rain from them, ſo that three Cities wandred to one City to drink water; but likewiſe that he ſmote them with blaſting and with mildew, with the Peſtilence after the manner of Egypt, with the Sword, and with Fire as diſmal as that which redu-

Cap. 4. v. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

ced

ced *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* to a heap of rubbish and ashes; and yet for all this they would not return unto God by reformation and amendment.

And do we think it possible for Gods Spirit always to strive with such a froward Generation? was it not high time for God to use the last and most rigorous means, when all other proved useless and ineffectual? Was it not high time for God quite to cashier them, and cast them out of his sight, when all other methods, though the Quintessence of the greatest fury and severity could no way reclaim them? No doubt it was: and therefore to this last
V. 12. of Judgments he threatens to have recourse; *Therefore this will I do unto thee, O Israel, and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God O Israel*; resolving hereby, that because nothing else would avail, to destroy their Nation, to root up that Vine and Vineyard which his own right hand had planted, to *send a Famine in the Land, not a Famine of bread, nor thirst for Water, but of hearing the words of the Lord*; by which they should be reduced to so wretched and deplorable a condition, as to turn common Vagrants or Vagabonds, and *to wander from Sea to Sea, and from North to East, and to run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord*, and yet should not be able after all their wearisom journies, after all their narrow searches and disquisitions to find that Word, that Law, those Ordinances which they sought and hunted after.

And thus I have acquainted you with the Nature of that Famine, and the dreadfulness of it, which is threatned to *Israel*; from whose example it will become a duty incumbent upon us, to look back upon our selves, whose state and condition at this day seems not at all unlike to theirs then: for our sins are of as deep a die, and our abominations as loathsome, and our transgressions as manifold, and our provocations as daring, and our impieties as provoking as theirs was before us, and God seems therefore now to threaten us after the same manner as

he

he did the Jews, with as bad or worſe a Famine by reaſon of ſuch hainous and abominable provocations.

And that this is too great a truth, will plainly appear to any one that conſiders the preſent poſture and ſtate of affairs in this Kingdom; for are there not at this day a brood of ſanguinary, blood-thirſty, and wicked Sons of *Belial*, who have endeavoured to ſubvert both Church and State, and reduce us all to a Famine indeed, to a real deſtitution of all true ſpiritual comforts and refreſhments? Had they not almoſt brought their wicked deſigns to effect, and doth not our Religion ſeem ſtill to lie at the ſtake? Doth not Deſtruction ſtill hover over our heads? And have we any certain ſecurity that we may not yet become a prey to theſe mercileſs Wolves and Tygers? There is more than a probability that God Almighty may ſuffer theſe very perſons to become ſnares and traps to us, ſcourges in our ſides, and thorns in our eyes. 'Tis more than probable that thoſe who ſo induſtriouſly conſult our ruine, may yet attain to their end, and ſo we may all periſh through their malicious machinations, that our Religion may be undermined, our Churches violated, our Temples made the Neſts and Cages of Popiſh Superſtition and Idolatry, and we our ſelves fall a Sacrifice to the Pope and his deviliſh Emiſſaries. And if this ſhould come to paſs, which our ſins and manifold tranſgreſſions do juſtly deſerve and call for; Alas, into what unſpeakable calamities ſhould we be involved? This would be a Famine of the higheſt degree, a Judgment the moſt grievous of all Judgments, as will appear again by theſe three following circumſtances. Joſh. 23. 13.

1. For firſt this would be a moſt certain indication, that as the meaſure of our iniquity was full, ſo the cup of Gods anger was full likewiſe, and that he was pouring out his utmoſt indignation againſt us. If once God ſhould ſuffer our Church to fall, and our Religion to be taken from us; if he ſhould once remove our Candleſtick, and not per-

permit us any longer enjoyment of his ſacred Ordinances amongſt us, we may be aſſured that his fury was kindled to the utmoſt height, that he ſuffered all this becauſe he could no longer endure us in his ſight, becauſe our preſent ſervice was an abomination to him, and our worſhip being ſo extreamly tinctured and mixed with hypocriſie, did enforce him to draw away his face from us.

For as true zeal and piety endear men to God, and render them his Favourites; ſo hypocriſie and irreligion eſtrangeth Gods affection utterly from them; nay, cauſeth a ſeparation, and ſets God at open enmity with them, and when once God hath declared himſelf an Enemy, then follow his Judgments, then are all the Vials of his Anger opened, and Sluces of his diſpleaſure plucked up to overwhelm them; and theſe fruitleſs Fig-trees, theſe unprofitable Servants, theſe wicked tranſgreſſors are curſed, and made an example of vengeance to terrifie others from the like evil courſes.

So that if God ſhould deal thus with us, and puniſh us after ſo rigorous, and ſo ſevere a manner, I know not for my part what would become of us; there is no further hopes of favour, of kindneſs, of friendſhip from him, we might have improved theſe better to our advantages whileſt we enjoyed them; and if the Kingdom of God, *i.e.* the Goſpel of Chriſt be taken from us, it will be given to ſome other Nation to bring forth better fruits under its enjoyment than we have done. So that this is the firſt thing that ſpeaks the dreadfulneſs of this Judgment, becauſe it will be a teſtimony, that God is irreconcilably angry with us, that he is reſolved to deſtroy us, and root out our memorial from off the face of the Earth.

Mat. 21. 43.

2. But ſecondly, there is another thing which will ſpeak the dreadfulneſs of this Judgment, and that is, that it will not onely be a means to cut us off from all hopes of Gods love and favour for the preſent, but for the future too, by depriving us of all thoſe means which might be moſt inſtrumental

ſtrumental to procure and regain it: for ſhould ſuch a Famine come amongſt us, then farewell to Gods Word and Miniſters, and by conſequence if theſe, which are the means and conduit-pipes of Grace, were ſtopped up, the way to Heaven would be precluded and ſtopped up likewiſe. Now that this would certainly be our caſe, ſhould Popery once more make a ſtep over the Seas, I ſhall evidence to you in a few inſtances.

1. For firſt, you would have ſome indeed come amongſt you, who would call themſelves the Miniſters of God, but you would quickly find a vaſt difference betwixt them and thoſe who now are his lawful Ambaſſadors; for they would not trouble themſelves to preach up the Goſpel ſo much as their own ſelves, their own gain, advantage, and filthy lucre: and though 'tis the misfortune and a ſad fate which attends the preſent Miniſters of the Church of *England* to be accuſed as covetous perſons, or hirelings, proud, or imperious perſons, men who lord it over their Brethren, and who encroach too far upon the dues, and rights, and eſtates of the Laity, yet ſhould the Scene change, and theſe men be caſhiered, you would find, that what you accuſe them falſly of, would be abundantly verified in their Popiſh ſucceſſors; and you would learn by too woful experience, what it is to be Prieſt-ridden, as you now call it, when upon every petty diſtaſte, upon the leaſt injurious uſage or affront put upon them, you ſhould hear them thundring forth, as the Heathens did of old to the primitive Chriſtians, *Chriſtiani ad Leones*, Away with the Chriſtians to the Lions; ſo they to you, *Hæretici ad Carbones*, Away with theſe Hereticks to Fire and Faggot. Then would you value thoſe Miniſters whom you now deſpiſe, and he whom you are pleaſed now to eſteem the moſt contemptible man amongſt us, would then be thought worthy of your beſt words and elogies, when your backs once felt but the ſmart of the *Römiſh Rod*; and every Pariſh-Prieſt would be even

an Anti-Pope to command you at his beck, and aw you at his pleasure.

2. But secondly, As the Ministry would fail, so would all true Religion too; For in stead of Gods Ordinances, humane Inventions should be enforced upon your Consciences, and Superstition and Idolatry should be imposed upon you, under the specious titles of Piety and Religion. You should have Prayers indeed allowed you, but they should be a Compound of *Ave-Maries*, and of Prayers to the Saints, and Prayers for the Dead; and that too in an unknown Tongue, and in a Language which none of you could possibly understand, and by consequence could never say *Amen* at your Devotions. You should have the Psalter of the blessed Virgin, compiled by the Seraphical Doctor S. *Bonaventure*, presented to you as more useful than the *Psalms* of holy *David*; and a Mass-Book clapt into your hands; but your Bibles claspt up and taken away from you, and you prohibited the reading of the Scriptures upon the penalty perhaps of eternal damnation. And in stead of the pure and sincere milk of the Word tendred you by some sober and rational Divine, you shall have probably one of *Johannes Argentus* his prime Catholick Disciples come, and extol in the Pulpit the excellent qualities of the Virgin *Maries* Milk, or one of S. *Francis* his Fry, crying up the great Vertues of S. *Francis* his Slipper; or the healing faculties of S. *Veronica's* Handkerchief; or else from some other of those Religious Juglers you shall hear a long ridiculous story of some miraculous Saint out of their famous Legend, which shall be as fooliſh and incredible as the Fable of *Garagantua*, or the *Wandring Jew*. Nay besides all this, you shall not only be compelled to worship the Virgin *Mary*, and pray to Saints, and fall down before Images, and pay reverence to Reliques, and prostrate your selves before Pictures and Crucifixes; but you shall be denied the Cup in the Sacrament, and taught that the Bread is the very

Body

Body of Chriſt, and under that notion will be enforced to receive and pay it homage: I ſay, notwithſtanding after 'tis conſecrated by the Prieſt, you ſee, and feel, and taſte, and ſmell that it is ſtill Bread, notwithſtanding you know 'tis a plain contradiction for one and the ſelf-ſame Body to be in a hundred places at one and the ſame time; yet this you muſt believe, and a thouſand other ridiculous fanſies, as that the Pope is infallible, that he is Chriſts Vicar, the Univerſal and Supreme Paſtor of the Univerſe, and is endowed with a Power and Empire over all Chriſtian Kings, Princes, and Potentates, at the leaſt *in ordine ad ſpiritualia.* Further, that there is ſuch a place as Purgatory, that Confeſſion to the Prieſt is abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, that in the Maſs there is a propitiatory Sacrifice both for quick and dead, that the Saints have a mint and treaſury of good works to ſpare, which they can lend to others, who want them, upon occaſion; that to doubt in the leaſt of miracles, traditions, and indulgences, the power of the Pope, and his Prieſts, or to entertain the leaſt thought of the poſſibility of being ſaved in any other Religion is a moſt enormous crime; Theſe, and whatever elſe the Prieſt ſhall bid you believe, that you muſt believe without making any ſcruple, or asking any queſtions for conſcience ſake: What days they pleaſe to ſet apart you muſt be ſure to obſerve, what penances they inflict you muſt patiently undergo, what they think fit to command from you, you muſt undeniably grant, or elſe nothing would make atonement for ſuch contempt and obſtinacy, but your very lives and fortunes.

This would be your caſe and this your condition, ſhould Popery prevail; and would not this be a ſore judgment indeed to be deprived of your preſent honeſt and good Miniſtry, and to be enſlaved by Popiſh tyranny? to be robbed of Gods ſacred word and to give ear to fables? to leave the true Religion, and be made vaſſals to a Religion which is ſuperſtitious and idolatrous? In a word,

Jerem. 2. 13. *to forſake the Fountain of living Waters, and to dig unto your ſelves Ciſterns, broken Ciſterns that will hold no Water?* How could you hope to find the way to Heaven by ſuch guides, to gain an entrance by ſuch blind Devotion, to merit glory by ſuch an implicit Faith? Certainly in ſuch circumſtances men muſt needs run the greateſt hazards imaginable of their immortal Souls, there would be little or no hopes of Salvation under ſuch means, and therefore a Judgment of this nature muſt needs be very terrible and amazing, nay the greateſt of Judgments that could befall this Nation.

3. Eſpecially if we conſider in the third place, that when God ſends this, it is the laſt of all Judgments, and therefore muſt needs be the moſt pernitious and dreadful: When God once works the downfal of a Nation, when he deſtroys a Kingdom, or ſuffers a Church to be buried in ruine, we may be ſure God hath poured upon that people the utmoſt dreggs of his fury, and that there is no other Judgment to ſucceed, but the moſt fatal of all is happened to them, in which all in general ſhall be concerned, and have their portion. In the caſe of the Sword, the Peſtilence, or Fire, 'tis poſſible ſome few may eſcape the Divine Vengeance, ſome may be reprieved till a further opportunity; but when once a whole Polity is laid in deſolation, every one then is a ſufferer, the blow is levelled at all, and there is none but feels the heavineſs, and the ſmart of it. And then woe, woe to us, ſhould this be our condition, as we have too great reaſon to fear it may be ſtill by Gods former proceedings with us, and our incorrigibleneſs under all his methods which he hath made uſe of to reclaim us: we know, 'tis not many years ago, ſince the Sword did glut it ſelf with the blood of many thouſands of our native Inhabitants; after that the Plague came in triumph, and erected its Trophies over all our Kingdom; after this ſucceeded a dreadful and terrible Fire, which laid in

aſhes.

aſhes the Metropolis of our Nation: And ſince all theſe three Judgments have not wrought in us that ſincere and hearty Reformation, which God expected they ſhould, what can we expect, but that God ſhould give a word of command for the laſt to come amongſt us, and ſo trouble himſelf no longer to puniſh ſo refractory and incorrigible a People? And if ſo, we can none of us eſcape, but we ſhall find the effect of it to be very direful and terrible; for when our Church is once in the duſt, and our Religion ſubverted, when all our Rites and Solemnities of Worſhip are obliterated and aboliſhed, and Gods Holy Word which ſhould nouriſh us up unto eternal Life, is taken from us, 'tis much to be feared, that God will never be ſo far reconciled as to reſtore them to us again, ſeeing we managed them ſo ill, when we had the happineſs of enjoying them: nay though afterward when we perceive the want of them, we ſhould ſeek them carefully with tears, and wander from Sea to Sea, and from Eaſt to North to find them, yet ſhall we be unſucceſsful, and miſs of what we deſire; lie down we muſt in the ſhades of darkneſs, where the Sun of Righteouſneſs will no more ariſe upon us with healing under his wings.

2. And now what it was that provoked God to threaten ſuch bitter and ſevere things againſt *Iſrael*, and upon what particular grounds and reaſons we in this Nation may juſtly dread the ſame Judgment, is the next thing I am to give an account of: Where though *Iſrael*, as I might ſhew at large, was a people notorious for all manner of tranſgreſſions againſt the Law of God, for all manner of vices which could poſſibly be committed, ſo that God had juſt reaſon to complain of them by his Prophet *Malachy*, *That even from the days of their Fathers they had gone away from his Ordinances, and had not kept them*, Chap. .verſ.7. upon which account God might juſtly execute the utmoſt rigor of his juſtice upon them; yet I ſhall at preſent inſtance but in three or four things, which as they did extremely

tremely aggravate their guilt, ſo did they call for, and haſten the greateſt vengeance upon their heads.

1. For firſt, they were a ſort of people that mocked, and deſpiſed both Gods Word and Meſſengers.

2. Secondly, they made no ſcruple to deprive their Prieſts of that, which was ſet apart by God as their Lot and Portion.

3. Thirdly, they were generally addicted to Irreligion and Profaneneſs.

4. And fourthly, if they did not break forth into open profaneneſs, they were no leſs blameable for their baſe ſecret hypocriſie.

Now when I have drawn the parallel betwixt them and us, and have ſhewn you that we have equalled, if not out-vied them in all theſe things; we ſhall then find from our ſelves as great reaſon to fear that God ſhould pour down in this nature his utmoſt indignation upon us, as ever he did upon that wicked and obſtinate people.

1. *Iſrael* was a ſort of people, that mocked, and deſpiſed both Gods Word, and Meſſengers: He that conſults the Hiſtory of thoſe times, will find this very viſible in their manners, and practices; in the days of *Amos* and *Iſaiah* they were grown to that paſs, that they ſilenced their Prophets, and commanded them not to ſpeak, unleſs it were ſuch things as tickled their ears, or gratified their humours; but when this would not do, and they found them of ſuch courage and undaunted ſpirits, that they did ſtill *cry aloud, ſpare not, but lift up their voices like trumpets, to ſhew Gods people their tranſgreſſion, and the houſe of Jacob their ſin*; why then they began to convert all their Prophets ſerious diſcourſes into mirth, and drollery, and made ſport with the graveſt matters, and concernments of Religion: they burleſqu'd the Prophet *Jeremiah*'s words, and turned the expreſſions he uſed into *ridicule*, crying in contempt, *The burden of the Lord*, which is called *perverting the words of the Living God:*

Amos 2. 12.
Iſaiah 30. 10.
Iſaiah 58. 1.
Jer. 23. 33, 36.

After

After the ſame manner did they deal with *Ezekiel*, whoſe words they turned into pleaſant Songs, or as the Margents of our Bibles have it, they made loves or jeſts of the moſt ſacred things, which the Prophet did utter for their benefit, and advantage: And no wonder that when *the Fathers had eaten ſower Grapes, the Childrens teeth were ſet on edge*; no wonder that when the Fathers had attained to ſo good a knack of mocking their Prophets, and were ſo notorious for the obloquies and contempt which they paſſed upon them, that their Children did ſo readily follow their examples, and that the Prophet *Eliſha* could not poſſibly eſcape the virulency of their tongues, whoſe years, one would have thought, ſhould have rendred them uncapable of ſuch vile miſdemeanors; upon which account no doubt it was, that the little Children having ſucked in ſuch prejudices againſt the Prophets with their milk, and learnt to rail againſt them from their very cradles, ventured to clamour after that good man with ſuch vile and baſe language (though they paid for it very dearly with the loſs of their lives) when the beſt words they could afford him were no better than theſe, *Go up thou baldhead, go up thou baldhead*: In fine their own Chronicles have given us ſo full an account of their ſcoffing, ſarcaſtick temper, that we need look no further for a teſtimony hereof, for 'tis ſaid there, that *they mocked the meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his words, and miſuſed his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his People, till there was no remedy*: from which it appears, that God did for ſome time forbear the people of *Judah*, beyond what they could have expected, waiting for their amendment until they added impudence to their obſtinacy, and made ſport with the Prophets, and laughed at every thing that was ſacred and religious; then the peremptory Decree came forth, and there was no hopes of eſcaping, then did *the anger of the Lord divide them, and he did no more regard them, becauſe they*

Ezek. 33. 32. *In Canticum oris ſui vertunt.* Vul. Lat.

Ezek. 18. 2.

2 Kings 2. 23, 24.

2 Chr. 36. 16.

Lament. 4. 16.

they regarded not the perſons of the Prieſts, and favoured not the Elders.

And indeed, as nothing doth more provoke God, than ſuch a ſcoffing humour, and ſuch a contemptuous uſage of his Servants, and Meſſengers; ſo nothing doth ſooner precipitate his Judgments, nay nothing can be a more certain prognoſtick, that they are even at the door, than that is: for there can be no worſe ſymptom to a people, than to laugh at the only means to cure them, and if this once grow common, it muſt needs make their condition deſperate; for then it comes to Gods turn to laugh, and to mock too; *Becauſe I have called, and ye have*
Prov. 1. 24, 25, 26. *refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would have none of my reproof, I alſo will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.*

Now if this was one reaſon, why God reſolved to ſend a Famine of the Word amongſt the *Jews*, to aboliſh their Worſhip, and baniſh them from their Prieſts, becauſe they made ſo light of them, nay did even take a pride to deſpiſe, and contemn them, to vilifie and abuſe them, what can we expect leſs in this Nation, who have far ſurpaſſed that people in this ſcoffing vein? Search the Annals of all Hiſtory, and compare the manners of all the Nations of the Earth with ours, and you ſhall find this vice, no not even amongſt Turks and Heathens, ſo predominant as it is in ours: and he that conſiders the baſe and unjuſt accuſations, the vile and ignominious obloquies, the ſordid and unworthy aſperſions, the black and malitious calumnies, in a word, the general deſpite and contempt, that is thrown upon the preſent Miniſtry of the Church of *England*, may cauſe him juſtly to believe, that God hath very great reaſon to revenge this injury by depriving them of ſuch Paſtors, whom they uſe ſo deſpightfully, and to
2 Theſſ. 2. 11, 12. *ſend them ſtrong deluſions to believe a lie, that they might all be damned, who believed not the truth, but had*

had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs: I wiſh that this miſchief had not ſpread it ſelf ſo univerſally over the face of this Nation, but (alas) the diſeaſe is grown now ſo Epidemical, that the Prieſt affords matter of ſport for all companies, and he that can be ſo ingenious to have a fling at him, ſhall be cryed up for a man of great wit and attainments, though in other things he is looked upon as very mean and inconſiderable; nay, our Children too (like the *Jewiſh* I mentioned before) have drawn in theſe prejudices with their very breath, for a man can ſcarce walk the ſtreets in many places, but he ſhall hear ſome of them ſpeak ſomething contemptible of a Miniſter, if he chance to paſs by; as if thoſe, who were formerly reputed the glory of Chriſtendom, were now to be eſteemed the very refuſe of the people; nay, the offſcouring, *catharmata, & ludibria*, the laughing ſtocks, and the moſt hateful of all mankind.

I remember, that it was part of the Liturgy in the *Greek* Church of old, to praiſe God, that out of his infinite condeſcenſion he had given them Miniſters and Teachers, not only of the ſame nature, and infirmities with themſelves, but alſo of like guilt, and under the ſame condemnation; becauſe, thereby having in themſelves a ſenſe of their own infirmities, and knowing the burden of ſin, and the ſubtilty of Satan, they might the better know likewiſe how to offer up Sacrifices and Oblations, both in behalf of themſelves and the people: but how is the ſcene altered! when inſtead of prayers, we meet with curſes, and the failings of ſome are either imputed to all, or elſe magnified to ſo high a degree, as if we were the Peſts and Grievances of the Nation! And now if God look upon the diſhonour done to his Miniſters, as done to himſelf, if St. *Paul* ſpeak true, that they who deſpiſe them deſpiſe not men, but God; according to that uſual ſaying, *Every man's meſſenger is as himſelf*, I cannot ſee why God ſhould any longer ſuſpend his judgments from us, who ſtand

1 Theſ. iv. 8.

guilty before him of so foul a misdemeanour: why should he not deprive us of those persons whom we thus set at nought, and use so contumeliously? and it may be some of us would be glad if God should do so; but should this happen to us, I dare very confidently affirm, that we should find it by too woful experience the greatest curse yet that ever befel this Kingdom.

2. A second reason, that might enforce God to hasten such a judgment upon *Israel*, by rooting out their Religion, was their depriving the Priests of that Lot and Portion which he himself had set apart for their use: whoever knows any thing of the *Jewish* Oeconomy, cannot possibly be ignorant, that the *Jews*, by a more especial injunction of God himself, were commanded to pay the tenth of all their substance to the Priests who served at his Altars, which tithes God was pleased to call his own, and to sanctifie himself, commanding that no part of it, whether it was good, or whether it was bad, should be so much as changed by any of the people: now notwithstanding all this, so covetous and worldly minded were the generality of the *Jews*, that they made no conscience to defraud God of his own, and the Priests of that which was allotted for their share: and though, when God reproved them for their unjust and fraudulent dealings towards him, they did justifie themselves, and expostulate the case with him, and were so insolent as to ask him the question (notwithstanding they could not but know their guilt) Wherein they had done him any injury? God deals very plainly, and tells them, that it was in robbing him of his Tithes and his Offerings: *Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me; but ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? in tithes and in offerings:* Well, but what was the fatal consequence of such filthy defraudations? what did they get by their Rapine and their Sacrilege? the next verse tells you, the curse of God was their reward, *Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me,*

Levit. xxvii. v. 30, 31.

Mal. iii. 8.

Verse 9.

even

even this whole nation. And may not we justly dread the same curse, whose defraudations are as great, and Sacrileg as insufferable? for though there is a certain portion of tithes set apart for our present Ministers under the Gospel, which our pious and good Ancestors have bestowed upon the Church, and the Laws of our own Nation have ratified and confirm'd, and God himself under the Gospel doth allow and commend, yet such is the unsatiable avarice of some worldlings amongst us, that they make no conscience to defraud the Ministers of their due; nay, have the impudence, in their vulgar discourse, to assert very commonly, that it is no sin to cheat the Parson; as if the taking away the Corn which belongs to me, were not as directly a breach of the eighth Commandment, which saith, *Thou shalt not steal*, as the taking away a Horse, which doth not belong to me, would be from another man: and now, when that which ought to be our shame is our Glory and our Triumph, when fraud and downright cozenage is so plausibly swallowed down, and they who are guilty of such things, yet lay their hands on their mouths, and say they are innocent, *Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord, shall not my soul be avenged of such a nation is this?* Jer. v. 29.

It was St. *Austins* complaint of old, that the covetous coldness of some Christians in his time persuading them to rob God, and to withdraw part of his portion, Tithes, from the Ministers, was a grand presage of Wars and Calamities coming upon them in *Africa*, (as indeed they did soon after) when the hand of violence would revenge the injury of Sacrilegious avarice, with the Soldiers Rapine, saith he, or the Exchequers confiscation will take what was grudged for Christ and his Church: I pray God the same injurious usage from the Laity, at this day, do not portend to this Nation the same, or worse Calamities, that the *Popish Harpies* do not come in amongst us, and revenge our injuries upon those persons who have dealt Aug. *Serm. de Temp.* 219. *Hom.* 48.

unjuſtly by us; I pray God (I ſay) that this ſin be not ſo far laid to their charge, as that ſome of that rapacious crue do not make as great a prey of them as they have done of us; for although it would be but a juſt one, yet it would be a curſe indeed, a puniſhment very grievous.

3. But I haſten to a third thing, which might precipitate ſuch a judgment upon the *Jewiſh* Nation, and that was their unſufferable degeneracy into all manner of irreligion and profaneneſs: if ever God had any right and title to worſhip, and ſervice from any people, it was certainly due from the *Jews*, who were ſo far his favourites, that he was pleaſed to entruſt and depoſit with them τὰ λόγια Θεοῦ, as the Apoſtle calls them, his Holy Oracles, the Divine Law written with his own finger; nay, further he did manifeſt himſelf to be a God who highly merited their true and ſincere ſervice, by the manifold deliverances he wrought for them, and the wonderful mercy he conferred daily upon their Nation: and yet ſo inconſiderate, inſenſate and ſtupid a people was this, that they were ſo far from calling to mind thoſe ſignal favours, wherewith he endeavoured to oblige them, and from thoſe conſiderations return him, in lieu thereof, a juſt and due proportion of duty and obedience, that inſtead of that they were arrived at ſo great a height of boldneſs and impiety, as even to ſnuff at Gods ſervice, and grew weary of it, and thought it a burden and a grievance to them; and therefore upon their Sabbaths and Feſtival days, when they ſhould have paid God the moſt ſolemn and ſerious Devotion, they began to think thoſe days moſt irkſome and troubleſome, becauſe they ſeem'd to hinder their gain and their Merchandize, and had the confidence to cry out, *When will the new Moon be gone, that we may ſell corn, and the ſabbath, that we may ſet forth wheat, making the Ephah ſmall, and the Shekel great, and falſifying the ballances by deceit? That we may buy the poor for ſilver, and the needy for a pair of ſhooes; yea, and ſell the*

Mal. i. 13.

Amos viii. 5, 6.

the refuſe of the wheat? nor did they ſtick here, but they became ſtill greater proficients in that helliſh art of irreligion, for the Prophet tells us again that they profaned the name of the Lord, ſaying, *The table of the Lord is polluted,* Mal. i. 12. *and the fruit thereof, even his meat is contemptible:* now upon theſe terms it was not poſſible for God any longer to withhold his hand, when he ſaw his Worſhip neglected, his Ordinances ſpurn'd at, and his Holy Name profaned: the next thing he could expect was to have his very Eſſence queſtioned, and his Soveraignty over them openly diſowned, and therefore it was high time for him to exert his power, and make them ſmart for their impieties.

And if we be convicted, and found guilty of as evil courſes, we likewiſe can expect no leſs favour or mercy: Now that this is our caſe, the Atheiſm and Impiety of the preſent Age doth abundantly verifie, for men are not content to be modeſt Atheiſts, and to ſay ſecretly in their hearts, with the fool, that *there is no God*, but impiety appears with a brazen forehead, and diſputes its place in every company, and without any regard to the voice of nature, to the dictates of conſcience, and the common ſenſe of mankind: men peremptorily determine againſt a ſupream Being, account it a pleaſant divertiſement to droll upon Religion, and a piece of wit to plead for Atheiſm: nay, as though the fountain of the great deep was broken up, and Hell were let looſe, and the Priſoners there had ſhaken off their Chains and came upon the earth, profaneneſs and all manner of wickedneſs grow ſo impudent and barefaced, that men do not only reproach, but totally neglect all Religion and Goodneſs.

Indeed in former Ages it was for the honour and glory of the Engliſh Nation, that as their genius prompted them to be very devout and religious, ſo they never omitted any opportunity to ſhew that real love they had for the Worſhip of God, and how mightily they delighted in a continual veneration of his moſt Sacred

Perſon,

Perſon, and in a conſtant performance of all the holy Offices which were enjoyned them by Chriſtianity: But ſince Atheiſm hath flown over the Seas, and infected this Kingdom; Good God! what a ſtrange degeneracy is in mens natures and inclinations? For if they do not openly diſcard all Religion, yet they have ſo ſmall a regard and eſteem for it, that it may juſtly provoke God to take it from them, and let them feel the want of it: When we ſee ſome ſo careleſs, and indifferent in performing all manner of religious Duties, that they care not whether they ſerve God, or not, when we ſee ſome abſenting themſelves from his Worſhip, and making every idle excuſe ſerve to cover their negligence, others abſenting themſelves from the Sacrament, and running away from the Lords Table with as much eagerneſs, as if the Plague would break forth upon them, and conſume them; others cavilling at the Liturgy, and Offices of the Church, becauſe not dreſſed up, nor ſhaped according to their fancies: in fine, when we ſee Gods Houſes deſerted, his Altars unfrequented, his Sacred Days profaned, his Word deſpiſed, and all manner of true Zeal and Devotion quite diſcarded in our daily aſſemblies; ſhall I not viſit for theſe things, ſaith the Lord? ſhall not my Soul be avenged of ſuch a Nation as this? I am ſure we have all the reaſon to expect he ſhould, when we give him ſuch juſt reaſon to avenge himſelf of us.

4. Eſpecially if we conſider in the fourth place, that there is ſomething ſtill behind, which as it doth aggravate ours, and *Iſraels* guilt, ſo it will likewiſe haſten our puniſhment, as it did theirs before us; and that is Hypocriſie, a ſin of ſo deep a dye, that nothing doth more incenſe God againſt a Nation than this doth: that no people could poſſibly be more addicted to this, than the *Jews*, is very evident from all their Prophets; they made nothing to commit the greateſt villanies in the world, and defile themſelves with the blackeſt crimes, and un-

der

der a ſpecious pretence of piety and innocency, cry out *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are theſe*: They pretended great zeal and love for Gods Worſhip, and Sanctuary, and varniſhed over all their evil actions with the falſe colours of Sanctity, and Holineſs: But behold how God, who ſeeth through the thickeſt veils of Hypocriſie, the moſt ſecret imaginations of the ſons of men, reproves them for it: *Will you ſteal, murder, and commit Adultery, and ſwear falſly, and burn Incenſe unto* Baal, *and walk after other gods, whom ye know not, and come, and ſtand before me in the Houſe, which is called by my Name?* As if God had ſaid, Do you think that though you are guilty of all theſe abominable ſins, yet your coming to my Houſe, your treading in my Courts, your calling on my Name, ſhall make an atonement for them? So far are ſuch dealings from pacifying my wrath, that it will but kindle it the more againſt you, for, *thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, mine anger, and my fury ſhall be poured out upon this place, upon man and upon beaſt, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground, and it ſhall burn, and not be quenched*: And therefore no wonder again it is that you find him by his Prophets *Iſaiah* and *Amos*, rejecting all their Sacrifices, and Oblations, and Aſſemblies, and profeſſing that he hated all their New Moons, and appointed Feaſts, and that all their Worſhip was an abomination to him, when he found it ſo extremely mixed with Hypocriſie; for when men pretend to be what they really are not, when they *draw near to God with their lips, but their hearts are far enough from him*, when they think to put a cheat upon him, and their own Souls, and make Religion a cloak for all manner of impiety, this doth ſo far ſeparate betwixt God and them, that it cauſeth him to hide his face from them, till at laſt he appear very formidable in his robes of vengeance, and then miſery, and confuſion is their inevitable lot and portion.

Jerem. 7. 4.

Verſ. 9, 10.

Verſ. 20.

Iſaiah 1. 11, 12. Amos 5. 21.

Iſaiah 29. 13.

And

And if ſo, then in what miſerable circumſtances are we in again of this Nation, whoſe hypocritical actions do ſtill keep pace with ſuch deceitful Jewiſh Worſhippers? How ready are many of us to come and ſtand before God, to viſit his Courts, and to worſhip him in his Holy Temple? But we hope that it is no offence to bring our ſins along with us, that our Fraud and Oppreſſion, our Pride and our Covetouſneſs, our Lying and our Slandering, our Malice and Uncharitableneſs may bear us Company to the Church, and yet we our ſelves are no leſs acceptable to God Almighty, as if God was obliged to us for the outward formalities of his Worſhip, and might very well afford to let us have our ſins into the bargain, as if Sacrifice was better than Obedience, and the labour of the Lips was much to be preferred before the true homage of the Heart: And that this is too true, daily experience may convince us, for may we not ſee ſome to day in the Church, complementing God into a belief, that they are his Servants, when behold to morrow we ſhall find them either the Devils ſlaves, or the Worlds drudges? May not we obſerve ſome to day very devout towards God, whom to morrow we ſhall find ready to devour their neighbour? Bleſſing God to day, and curſing men to morrow? Praying to Chriſt now perhaps with ſome fervency, and anon with no leſs vigour belying and backbiting, or oppreſſing their fellow-Chriſtian? Hearing a Sermon one hour, and the very next reſolving to act and do clear contrary to what they hear? And can we think that God will accept of ſuch worſhippers as theſe? That ſuch monſters made up of light and darkneſs, ſhall be as dear to him as his Children, or that ſuch a form of godlineſs will be as grateful as the power of it? if we do we are ſtrangely miſtaken, for believe it, ſuch things as theſe are the higheſt provocations, and if we in this Nation perſevere and continue in them, if we take a delight in playing the Hypocrites, and make Religion a cloak for

for the fouleſt abominations, it is but juſt for God to take from us that Religion which we ſo groſly abuſe, to lay open our fallacies, and diſcover our ſecret wickedneſs, and make us appear by the dreadfulneſs of his judgments upon us, to be what we really are, a deceitful, impious and incorrigible Generation.

3. This, I ſay, God may and will do if we do not timely prevent it, but, God be thanked, there is yet a poſſibility that this may be done, God, I hope, hath not paſt an irrevocable Sentence upon us, but we may yet reverſe it, if we pleaſe, our ſelves; now by what means and methods this may certainly be accompliſhed is the third and laſt Head of Diſcourſe I am to ſpeak to.

And here, though I might inſtance in divers things which would be very effectual to this purpoſe, yet I ſhall contract them all to three, and leave them then to your ſerious conſideration.

1. It will be very requiſite for you to ſet a due value and eſtimation upon that Church and Religion which is now eſtabliſhed.

2. To humble your ſelves before God, and be inceſſant in your prayers and ſupplications to him.

3. To caſt away all thoſe ſins and abominations, which, by reaſon of their heinouſneſs, cry to Heaven for vengeance, and may juſtly provoke God to plague us with ſuch a judgment.

Firſt, Learn to ſet a true value and eſtimation upon that Church and Religion which is now eſtabliſhed amongſt us, for that will be one means for God to preſerve and to continue it to us. He that duly weighs and conſiders with himſelf, not only the preſent way of worſhip which is eſtabliſhed in our Church, but the purity of its Doctrine, and the excellency of its Inſtitutions, as he will find, that it is not poſſible for him, in any other Church of the World, to be a more honeſt man, a more dutiful Subject, and a better Chriſtian, than he may be in the Fellowſhip

and Communion of the Church of *England*; ſo ought he upon ſuch conſiderations to have the greateſt eſteem, and honour and kindneſs for this Church, which doth the beſt deſerve it.

Now becauſe this regard and eſteem cannot be better expreſſed than by laying aſide all unjuſt and undue prejudices againſt it, and by an unanimous embracing all its holy ſanctions, therefore muſt theſe two things be carefully obſerved by him.

Firſt, It is very neceſſary, in order to the ſetling men in a due regard and eſteem for our preſent Church, to lay aſide all unjuſt prejudices againſt it: it was ever for the honour of the Church of *England*, that her Principles and Doctrines were always found true from error and falſity, that in matters of faith ſhe ſtill kept up to the Primitive Rule, and never enjoyned any thing to be received as a truth, but what the word of God did ſufficiently confirm, and the firſt and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity did aſſert and maintain to be ſo: and for what concerns all her outward Rites and Ceremonies, all her Government and Inſtitutions; although ſome of her unnatural and diſobedient Sons have, upon this account, beſpattered her reputation, and flung durt in her face, and have endeavoured to pollute her Garments, and ſubvert both her Order and Diſcipline, and like the Children of *Edom* in the day of *Jeruſalem*, have cryed, *Down with her, down with her even to the ground*; yet theſe have been ſo fully evinced to be only the effects of the deepeſt malice and envy, that we find the judicious *Hookers* aſſertion, in his Preface to his *Eccleſiaſtical Polity* ſtill abundantly verified: That ſurely the preſent form of Church Government, which the Laws of this Land have eſtabliſhed, is ſuch, as no Law of God, no Reaſon of man hath hitherto been alledged of force ſufficient to prove they do ill, who to the uttermoſt of their power withſtand the alteration thereof; and contrariwiſe, the other, which inſtead of

Pſal. cxxxvii. ver. 7.

it

it we are required to accept, is only by error and miſconceit called the Ordinance of Jeſus Chriſt, no one proof as yet brought forth, whereby it may clearly appear to be ſo in very deed, And if ſo, why ſhould any one be prejudiced againſt that Church, which doth not command any thing contrary to the word of God, or which is not agreeable to the firſt and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity? Why ſhould any one be ſo unreaſonable to ſeparate from a Church, which is *ſtupor mundi*, the amazement of the world for Piety, Learning, and true Religion, only by reaſon of a few outward modes and Ceremonies, when nevertheleſs thoſe very Ceremonies contain nothing in them, which is any way inconſiſtent with the ſubſtantial parts of Religion, but are very uſeful and neceſſary to beautifie and adorn it? I ſay, who would any longer deſert this Church upon ſuch grounds as theſe are, eſpecially when we conſider that ſuch prejudices as theſe give the greateſt advantage to our common Enemy, the Pope, whilſt by our difference about trifles, he takes an opportunity to open the gap wider, to foment our Diviſions, and increaſe the Schiſm, and come upon us unawares whilſt we are at variance amongſt our ſelves, and ſo work the ruin and downfal of us all?

And then tell me, whether would the yoke of the Church of *England* or of *Rome* be more intolerable? Which do you think would be more eaſie to you, the bloody Court of Inquiſition, or the Conſiſtory of our Biſhops? Which would be moſt grateful, a few innocent Ceremonies in our Church, or the conſtant practice of ſuperſtition in theirs? Which would be moſt acceptable, a grave Liturgy of Prayers directed to God alone, in a Language which you all underſtand, as it is in ours, or an extravagant Form of Prayers to Saints and Angels, and in a Tongue too of which you are ignorant, as it is with them? in fine, whether, had you better adhere to a Church which is guilty of the greateſt corruptions, both in faith

and manners, as it is at this day evident in the Church of *Rome*, than ſubmit to a Church which is free from all ſuch things as it is at this day with the Church of *England*?

And now if theſe things ſtrike a dread and terror into you, if the Popiſh Tyranny doth affect you with horrour, and you tremble to think of their cruelties and perſecutions towards thoſe who do not embrace their monſtrous Tenents and Doctrines, have a care you provoke not God to deliver you up once more to their power, and leave you to be inſlaved and tortured by the *Janizaries* of *Rome*, for your uncharitable practices towards the Church of *England*, let not your unjuſt cavils and aſperſions, your prejudices and ill will you bear towards it enforce him to take it away from you, ſince you know not how to value the bleſſing you enjoy by the eſtabliſhment of it, and leave you to be blinded with the ſpirit of Error and Idolatry; but be at laſt perſwaded to open your eyes, and have but once a due regard to that Churh, whoſe Docttines are ſo ſound, whoſe Principles are ſo firm, and whoſe integrity ſo unqueſtioned.

And when once you have ſo far conſidered its worth and excellency, as to eſteem and value it as you ought to do, by laying aſide all your prejudices againſt it, you will then quickly be perſwaded with one heart, and one mind, to embrace all thoſe ſanctions and inſtitutions which ſhe thinks fit to enjoyn you, which is the ſecond thing I ſhall propoſe to you.

Unity is the very Bond, and Cement of all Chriſtian Society, and 'tis impoſſible to make a rupture in that body which is tied, and kept cloſe together by this holy Ligature, and this our adverſaries know very well, and therefore though they endeavour unity as much as in them lies amongſt themſelves, becauſe it renders them very ſtrong and formidable, yet they have ſo far experienced the old Maxim, *Divide & Impera*, that it hath been their buſineſs

buſineſs to cauſe their buſineſs to cauſe the greateſt diviſions, and ſeparation amongſt us, that ſo they may make a prey of us, and like the Kite in the Fable carry away the feeble combatants whilſt they are pecking at one another with bents and bulruſhes: and to this purpoſe it is, that they are creeping into all houſes, and transforming themſelves, like *Proteus*, into all ſhapes, hence it is that they counterfeit any manner of Sect, and cant in all tones, and adapt themſelves to all humours, and become all things to all men, though in another ſenſe that S. *Paul* did, even to ſeduce all. And now though we know this to be their project, and deſign to ſubvert Church and State, and are ſenſible they can no way better do it than by widening the breach of ſeparation, yet are we ſo fooliſh to hearken ſtill to the bewitching charms of theſe Sirens, till they draw us at laſt into the ſea of deſtruction? Hath not the wiſeſt man that ever lived told us that *a Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand?* And did not the ancient *Britains* experience this truth in this Nation, when by their mutual feuds and animoſities they fell a Sacrifice to their foreign enemies, for, *dum pugnant ſinguli vincuntur univerſi?* Nay have we not great reaſon to believe what ſome conſidering perſons have affirmed upon very probable conjectures, that if ever Popery came in amongſt us, it would moſt certainly creep in through the back door of Separation? And yet for all we know, and are forewarned of this, ſhall we give the opportunity to theſe *Philiſtins* to bind us, and take from us our ſtrength by cutting away the locks of Unity that would make us invincible? Were you ever in more danger than at this time? Do you not ſee theſe mad Bulls of *Baſhan* ramping and roaring, and gnaſhing upon you with their teeth? Upon which account there was never a more abſolute neceſſity to forget all animoſities, to lay aſide all unneceſſary cavils and ſcruples than now, and to join your forces together with one conſent, leſt *the* Romans *ſhould come and take away both*

Luke xi. 17.

Pſal. xxii. 12, 13.

John xi. 48.

both your place and Nation. Join therefore your hands and hearts together, and become as one people, for ſuch a bleſſed Union would fruſtrate all the deſigns and plots of our enemies, it would become a brazen wall of defence round about us, which they would never be able to undermine, or caſt down, it will put them quite out of heart, and daſh all their hopes, it would take away from them all advantages, and put them to their laſt ſhifts; nay in fine, 'tis the only way to continue peace and happineſs to the Nation: for God who is the God of peace, of order and unity, would then begin to take a delight in us, and protect us under the ſhadow of his wings from all the outward violences and ſecret machinations of the ſons of Belial, and if we could once be perſwaded to arrive at ſo good, and holy a temper of mind, as *with one heart, and one voice to glorifie God even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, this would ſo far endear him to us as to enſure him on our ſides, and to gain his Patronage; and then let men or devils combine againſt us, and threaten our Church with ruine and deſolation, *He that ſitteth in the Heavens would laugh them to ſcorn, the Lord would have them in deriſion:* and as he would defeat all the evil contrivances of our enemies againſt it, ſo would he raiſe it to greater beauty and luſtre, and eſtabliſh it upon ſuch firm, durable and laſting foundations, that the gates of Hell ſhould never be able to prevail againſt it: Since then theſe would be the joyful effects of Unity, ſince this would make God to be our peculiar Guardian, and us to be his more eſpecial favourites, ſince this would be a means to ſecure us from all our enemies, and reduce us to a bliſsful, and a flouriſhing condition, if either you deſire to deſire to promote the common intereſt of your Religion, or your Brethrens welfare, or your Nations happineſs, let S. *Pauls* advice ſink down in your hearts, and appear practicable in your lives; *I beſeech you, Brethren, by the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that you all ſpeak*

Rom. xv. 6.

Pſal. ii. 4.

1 Cor. i. 10.

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the ſame things, and that there be no diviſions amongſt you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.

2. Secondly, as united hearts, minds, and judgments would become one very inſtrumental means to divert Gods Judgments from us, ſo would our joint concurrence in humbling our ſelves by Prayer and Supplication be another excellent way to move God to commiſerate our condition, and preſerve us from deſtruction. When *Jonah* came with that ſevere meſſage to *Niniveh*, that in forty days God was reſolved to deſtroy it, both nature, and the preſent danger they were in ſuggeſted it to them to addreſs themſelves in all humility to the ſupreme Being, who had ſent his Prophet to denounce that Judgment againſt them, and both King and People, Man and Beaſt was covered with ſackcloth, and they lift up their voices with one accord, and cried mightily to God to deliver them from that evil, which he threatned againſt them, and we find that they met with ſucceſs ſuitable to the importunity and fervency of their prayers, for *God repented him of the evil, which he ſaid he would do to that City, and did it not.* Jonah iii. 8, 9.

O let us follow the ſame method at this day, let us humble our ſelves before Almighty God, and if there be ever a *Jacob* amongſt us, any who can wreſtle and prevail with God, let him forthwith ſet about ſo glorious a work, for never was there more need of ſuch preſſing interceſſions: Alaſs, when we ſee our enemies ready to devour us, when we find they are reſtleſs in their plots and conſpiracies againſt us, 'tis ſure high time for us to fall to our prayers, and be as reſtleſs in our ſupplications to God Almighty to diſappoint them: and indeed if we were but once really ſenſible of our danger, as it would melt the ſtrongeſt heart living, and make it bleed to conſider the miſeries that would enſue from hence, ſo would it make us fly forthwith with the greateſt ſpeed to Gods

Sanctuary,

Sanctuary, and there implore the Auxiliaries of Heaven to ſuccour and relieve us: and ſince we know not how long we may enjoy the bleſſed opportunity of treading in Gods Courts, and calling upon his name, and deprecating his judgments, as bleſſed be God, we do yet for the preſent; ſince we are not ſure how ſoon we may be baniſhed from his Temples, be abridged of his worſhip, be deprived of his word, and made to wander to and fro from this place to that place, from this City to that City, to ſeek that word, which yet we ſhall not be able to find, why do not we make the beſt uſe of it whilſt we may? Why do not we aſſemble more unanimouſly together, and with whole Volleys of Prayers ſtorm the gates of Heaven, and enforce God to ſtand up for us, and to become our defence and refuge? If your Houſes were like to periſh in a general Conflagration, would you not all run to quench the fire with the greateſt celerity? And when the whole Kingdom is ready to be put into a flame by a company of turbulant Popiſh Incendiaries, will not you be as ready to uſe all poſſible means to obſtruct and allay it? Now ſince nothing can be more effectual to this purpoſe than Prayer, why are we ſo backward in the performance of this Holy Duty? What is the reaſon our petitioners are ſo few, and the Houſe of Prayer ſo empty and unfrequented? Alas, Can we think that God will do what we would have him, though we ſay nothing at all to him, or that a ſhort, ſlight, ſleepy-hearted addreſs now and then, when we pleaſe, will ſerve the turn? Can we hope to bind Gods hands with withs and ſtraws, to arreſt his vengeance with weak and feeble Aſſaults? What our Saviour ſaid in another caſe, that this kind, ſpeaking of ſuch Devils as had got poſſeſſion of mens bodies, goeth not out but by Prayer and Faſting; may be ſaid of the *Jeſuits*, the Devils of Sedition and Faction, of Treaſon and Rebellion, thoſe Familiars of *Rome*, and *Rhemes*, and St. *Omers*, as they are juſtly ſtiled by the greateſt Prelate in

The Arch-Biſhop of *Canterbury* in his late Sermon before the Houſe of Lords.

in this Nation, which have ſo long poſſeſſed and agitated a wretched part of this Kingdom, they are not to be quelled eaſily or driven out from hence, but by the moſt ſerious humiliation, and by the moſt fervent prayers and ſupplications of holy Votaries: then let our hands never wax heavy, but be always held up like *Moſes*, in a devout importunity; let us conſider, and lay to heart what great need we have now more than ever, to be conſtant at Church, and devout at our prayers, and from thence be perſwaded with one accord to perform this ſo acceptable a duty, let us lift up our hearts and voice in ſome ſuch petition as that of Holy *David*, *O, deliver not the ſoul of thy turtle dove to the multitude of the wicked, forget not the congregation of the poor for ever. Ariſe, O God, plead thine own cauſe, remember how the fooliſh man blaſpheməth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies, the tumult of thoſe that riſe up againſt thee increaſeth continually.* Pſal. lxxiv. ver. 19.

3. Now if to ſuch ardent Petitions as theſe we add in the laſt place a true and ſerious Reformation of what is amiſs amongſt us, then will God be intreated for the Land, and become gracious unto us: but indeed without this there is very little hopes of it; for can we think that when continual provocations are offered to him, he will ſtill connive at them, and bear with them? Can we imagine that when the blaſphemies of the profane, the ſenſualities of the voluptuous, and the mockeries of the Hypocrite ſend up daily challenges to Heaven, this will not at laſt overcome Gods patience and long-ſuffering, awake him to vindicate the honour of his name, and not ſuffer it any longer to be thus proſtituted and polluted? Will the deepeſt ſighs, or the loudeſt clamours to Heaven be able to drown our impieties, or the moſt importunate Petitions make an atonement for our tranſgreſſions? no, the wiſe man hath told us, *That the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*, and it was the blinds mans Prov. xv. 8.

Joh. ix. 31. Divinity in the Goſpel, *Now we know that God heareth not ſinners*; and therefore it was well obſerved by St. *Cyril*, that it was very abſurd, for thoſe who come by Prayer to obtain mercy, to provoke the Divine Law-giver another way by not doing what he commands. The only way to have all our ſupplications anſwered by God with a gracious return, is to make our lives the tranſcripts of our Prayers, not only to pray againſt ſin, but to endeavour to relinquiſh thoſe ſins we pray againſt, not only to beg of God that he would enable us to perform his Holy Laws, but actually to ſet our ſelves about the performance of that which we crave of him: and unleſs we do thus, our Prayers are but the labour of the Lungs, which, like bellows, make the fire of Gods anger burn fiercer, but do not blow it out: therefore, ſaith God to the *Jews*, Iſa. i. 15. *When you ſpread forth your hands, I will hide my face from you*; when you make many Prayers I will not hear, and what was the reaſon of this? the following words tell you, *your hands are full of blood*: As if God had ſaid, you come and worſhip in my Temple, and offer up the Sacrifice of Prayer to me, but you keep your old ſins, and ſtick cloſe to your former tranſgreſſions, and this makes me hate and abominate all your ſervice; but then, as he reproves them ſeverely for ſuch Hypocriſie, ſo in the next place he preſcribes them a way to regain his favour. Verſe 16, 17, &c. *Waſh you make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to evil, learn to do well, ſeek judgment, relieve the oppreſſed, judg the fatherleſs, plead for the widow*; Come now, and let us reaſon together, though your ſins be as ſcarlet they ſhall be white as ſnow, though they be red as crimſon, they ſhall be as wooll. If ye be willing and obedient, ye ſhall eat the good of the Land, but if ye refuſe and rebel, ye ſhall be deſtroyed by the ſword: The ſame advice is given them by *Jeremiah*, Jerem. xvii. 4. *Truſt ye not in lying words, ſaying, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are*

theſe

theſe. For if ye throughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; if ye oppreſs not the ſtranger, the fatherleſs and the widow, and ſhed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other Gods to your hurt; then will I cauſe you to dwell in this place in the Land that I gave to your fathers for ever and ever.

So that you ſee upon what terms 'tis God ſuſpends his judgments, 'tis upon repentance and amendment, and therefore we find in the inſtance I gave you before of *Nineveh*, that when they there did turn away every one from his evil way, and from the violence that was in their hands, God had mercy on them, and deſtroyed them not; by which we may find what we of this Nation are now to hope and truſt to; for the reſult of all in this, if we perſiſt in our diſobedience and impenitency, in our contempt of God and Religion, in Profaneneſs and Hypocriſie, ſuch things will moſt certainly make us ripe for Gods vengeance, but if we reclaim our evil ways, and reform what is amiſs; if we worſhip God more devoutly, and pray unto him ſincerely, and repent unfeignedly, then will God preſerve us ſtill from our enemies, all the Jeſuits and Emiſſaries of *Rome* ſhall never be able to do us any prejudice, but our Church ſhall ſtill flouriſh, and our Kingdom ſhall enjoy greater meaſures of happineſs, and we ſhall all ſit under our Vines and our Figg-trees to eat the fruit of our labour in peace and tranquillity.

I will conclude all therefore with the Prophet *Zephaniah*'s advice, and let us all endeavour to treaſure it up carefully in our hearts: *Gather your ſelves together, before the decree bring forth, before the day paſs as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you: Seek ye the Lord, all the meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment, ſeek righteouſneſs, ſeek meekneſs: it may be you ſhall be hid in the day of the Lords anger.* Zeph. ii. 1, 2, & 3.

GODS CALL TO Weeping and Mourning.

SERMON II.

ISAIAH xxij. 12, 13, 14.

And in that day did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth.

And behold, joy and gladness, slaying Oxen, and killing Sheep, eating Flesh, and drinking Wine: let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die.

And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of Hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts.

IT is not long since we kept a Day of Humiliation to implore Gods Mercy, and deprecate his Judgment, which seemed to hang over our heads, by a bloody Plot contrived by Papists, to murder our King, to subvert our Religion, and enslave our Kingdom by reducing it again under the *Romish Yoke*, a Yoke which neither we nor our Forefathers were able to bear.

And

And he that conſiders with himſelf how ready and active the Devil is, who was ἀνθρωποκτόνος *a murderer from the beginning*, ſtill to inſtigate and ſpur forward his Agents, to ſet Kingdoms in flames, and make the Streets ſwim with the Blood of good and holy Chriſtians; how willingly the Jeſuits, who be his chiefeſt Factors, do obey ſuch diabolical motions, under what unhappy circumſtances we of this Nation are for the preſent by reaſon of our manifold and potent enemies abroad, our private feuds and diviſions at home, and above all our open daring and notorious ſins and abominations, which juſtly call aloud to heaven for vengeance upon us, will certainly be perſwaded that a ſecond day of Humiliation is no leſs neceſſary than the former, which it is much to be feared was not obſerved with thoſe hearty reſentments of indignation againſt our ſins, with thoſe ſincere teſtimonies of outward and inward contrition, and with thoſe cordial reſolutions of future reformation and amendment, which the grievouſneſs of the Judgment, and the greatneſs of the danger impendent over us did juſtly require at all our hands.

John viii. 44.

And now that the drowſy may be awakened, the ignorant inſtructed, the negligent excited, the improvident forewarned, and all of us deeply affected with a true ſenſe of our condition, and by a timely repentance prevent thoſe calamities which threaten the extirpation of the Eccleſiaſtical and Civil Polity amongſt us, I have made choice of theſe words of the Prophet, wherein God ſeems now to give us as ſeaſonable a call, as he did then to the *Jews*: *And in that day did the Lord God of Hoſts call to weeping, and to mourning*, &c. From which words there are three things will fall under our conſideration.

1. The unſpeakable Mercy and Kindneſs of God to the *Jews*, in calling them to a ſolemn and ſerious humiliation; Ver. 12. *In that day did the Lord God of Hoſts call to weeping,*

weeping, and to mourning, and to baldneſs, and to girding with ſackcloth.

2. The horrible Ingratitude of the *Jews*, who inſtead of humbling themſelves before God, went on in their former habituated courſes of voluptuouſneſs, and ſenſuality: For *behold* ver. 13. *joy and gladneſs*, &c.

3. The aſtoniſhing Reſolution of God upon their not hearkning to, and obeying that gracious call, *viz.* to root them out and deſtroy them: Ver. 14. *Surely your iniquity ſhall not be purged from you till you die, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.*

I. I begin with the firſt of theſe, the unſpeakable mercy and kindneſs of God to the *Jews*, in calling them to a ſolemn and ſerious Humiliation: *In that day did the Lord of Hoſts call to weeping, and to mourning*, &c. Whether this call was by his Prophet threatning them with ſome ſevere Judgment for their perſeverance in iniquity, or whether by ſome ſmart Judgment which God thought fit to lay upon them, he endeavoured to reclaim them from the evil of their ways, and bring them to a ſight and ſenſe of their follies before their final extirpation, 'tis certain that either or both of theſe calls were very expreſſive of his loving kindneſs towards them.

1. For firſt, it argues the great Care and concernment God had ſtill for their Nation, how ſollicitous he was to preſerve, and to continue it, to protect and to defend it, to make them ſtill a glorious and a flouriſhing people, happy in themſelves, and a terror to their enemies.

2. And ſecondly, it was an argument of his Patience and forbearance, in ſparing and reprieving them from puniſhment when they moſt deſerved it.

3. And thirdly, it was an incentive to their Duty, a *memorandum* to put them in mind, what courſe they ſhould take under ſuch gracious methods, namely to fall *to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldneſs, and to girding with ſackcloth*; that is, by ſuch outward lugubrious geſtures

ſtures of body, as well as an inward anguiſh and vexation of ſpirit, to declare their ſincere hatred of all ſin, and reſolution of amendment.

So that from hence here will be three things to be inſiſted upon.

1. The Providence of God in taking care of Kingdoms and Communities of Mankind, he ſuffers not things to go at random in them, but he diſpoſeth of them as he thinks fit, and when there is a neceſſity he calls to them.

2. His Patience and forbearance, he doth not puniſh without giving them notice, he calls them firſt, and then he ſtrikes.

3. The End of all his gracious calls, 'tis to work in them a thorough humiliation for their tranſgreſſions.

1. Firſt, I ſhall conſider the Providence of God in taking care of Kingdoms, and Communities of Mankind, where all things do not happen by chance, but the divine diſpoſal of God Almighty, who calls to them, and exerts his power amongſt them when there is occaſion for it. It was a fond and ſtrange opinion of the *Epicureans* of old, that God was ſo taken up with the contemplation of his own excellencies and perfections, that he would not ſo much as vouchſafe to caſt one glance down upon theſe Sublunary Regions; that it was below the Majeſty of Heaven to be concerned in the pitiful affairs of poor earthly miſcreants, and to be angry at their follies, or ſeem to applaud their actions, was irreconcileable with the Divine Happineſs, which was unmixed and pure, free from any thing that might diſturb or diſquiet it: a fancy no doubt which *Lucian* gathered from their Schools, (in which he was no ſmall proficient, as a learned and worthy perſon tells us) for he brings in old *Japetus* and *Saturn* tipling Nectar together, and ſpending their time in telling old ſtories, *Saturn* confeſſing that he was gouty, which gave occaſion to the Poets to write, that he was fettered

Archdeacon of *Canterbury* in his Book *De Deo & Providentia.*

tered by *Jupiter*, to whom as being the younger, and more active, he reſigned the thunder, and the Kingdom, not troubling himſelf with hearing mens prayers, and puniſhing their offences, that being a troubleſome and irkſome piece of ſervice. But if God Almighty be thus confined to Heaven, and his Providence doth not expand it ſelf over all the Univerſe, what account can be given of the eſtabliſhment of one Kingdom upon the ruines of another; that one Nation, whoſe Senators are wiſe and politick, whoſe Armies are ſtrong and numerous, whoſe People are warlike and couragious, ſhould fall a prey to another which is far inferiour to them, either in wiſdom or conduct, in ſtrength or policy? How can this poſſibly be ſolved but by admitting that it is God who weakens and infatuates the one, and ſtrengthens, and gives aſſiſtance to the other, and by that means declares himſelf to be the Perſon alone that ſetteth up one Kingdom, and plucketh down another, as it ſhall ſeem good to him in his wiſdom and juſtice. Look we but abroad into the revolution of ſome of the grand Empires and Kingdoms of the world, and we ſhall find this truth abundantly verified. Tell me, what could make *Cyrus* the *Perſian* ſo puiſſant and victorious over the fierce Nations of the *Eaſt*, but that God who raiſed him up, and called by his name long before he was born, was an aſſiſtant to him, and crowned him with ſucceſs by leading him into *Babylon*, when that City was moſt ſecure, full of wine and jollity, at an anniverſary feaſt, by a way they little dreamed of? And what could entitle the *Macedonian* Prince *Alexander* to ſo great Victories over the *Perſians*, but that God infatuated their Counſels, and gave him ſuch advantages, which if he made but uſe of, he could not fail of ſucceſs? It might ſeem ſtrange to ſome, that the cowardly *Goths*, and barbarous *Vandals*, and deſpicable *Hunns*, ſhould make ſuch devaſtations in the *Roman* Empire, which had been a terrour to the greateſt part of the World, and that in

fifty years time more of it ſhould be loſt and deſtroyed, than had been conquered in a thouſand; but when again 'tis conſidered that the hand of God was in this deſolation, and that ſomething which was divine over-ruling all the Counſels and Stratagems of the graveſt *Roman* Senators, made that Nation at laſt improſperous in all their enterprizes, we may juſtly ceaſe our wondering, and conclude with *Solomon*, that *the race is not always to* Eccleſ. ix. 11. *the ſwift, nor battel to the ſtrong*, but that God ordereth and diſpoſeth all things as ſeems moſt expedient to his infinite wiſdom.

But to come nearer to the Text, how often did the *Jews*, with a handful of men, work miracles againſt their ſtrongeſt enemies? How many Cities did they deſtroy? How many Fortreſſes did they demoliſh? What Armies did they put to flight, and how many Nations did they ſubdue, and that many times by ſuch unlikely means, by ſuch weak forces, and under ſuch unhappy circumſtances, that nothing can be plainer, that if ſo be God had not preſided in their Councils, inſpirited them with courage, removed all difficulties, and fought their battels, it had been impoſſible for them to have effected ſuch wonderful exploits: but now although he had taken ſo great care of them, had ſubdued all the Nations under them, and given them the Land of the Heathen for an inheritance, yet to ſhew them likewiſe that he had ſtill the ſame power to diſpoſe of them and their Kingdom to other people, as he had done of other Kingdoms to them; he calls to them to learn ſo much duty from his care and his providence over them, as to humble themſelves under his Almighty hand, leſt he ſhould make them as great a prey Deut. ix. 4, 5. to their Enemies as their Enemies had been to them; for as it was not for the righteouſneſs or the uprightneſs of their hearts, that God gave poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan* to *Iſrael*, but for the wickedneſs of thoſe Nations did the Lord drive them out from before them, ſo would he

he deal with them, and by the ſame Arm of providence deſtroy them before the face of the Heathen, if they did not forſake the evil of their ways, and become obedient unto the voice of the Lord their God.

You ſee then how far the Providence of God is pleaſed to intereſt, and concern it ſelf with Societies of mankind; as there is no Nation, which is out of its reach, ſo there is none but hath felt the effects of its influence, and if we will but take the pains to trace it in thoſe footſteps which are viſible in this our Kingdom, we ſhall find ſuch evident marks, and notices of it amongſt us, as will juſtly call us to a ſerious humiliation for the further continuance of ſuch mercies towards us: that for theſe many years now together we of *England* have enjoyed a bleſſed and a glorious peace in our Nation, whilſt all *Europe* beſide hath ſwom in ſtreams of blood; that we ſhould all be exempted from the miſery of War, whilſt our Neighbours round about us have been continually ſpoiled and haraſſed by the rapine and cruelty of the inſolent Soldiery, that the black Clouds, and frightful Hurricanes, which the Jeſuits have conjured up, ſhould not fall down in ſhowers of blood and vengeance upon our heads; that all the bold Popiſh Confederates, who, like St. *Paul's* Aſſaſſinates, had bound themſelves under the moſt ſolemn vows and obligations, that they would murder our Sovereign, maſſacre his Subjects, ſubvert our Church, and undermine our State, ſhould as yet be diſappointed and defeated in their machinations; to what can we juſtly aſcribe all this, but to the gracious Protection and Providence of God Almighty? Indeed, did not he ſpread his ſhady wings over us, and protect us, we ſhould ſoon fall under theſe Popiſh Cormorants clutches, ſo ſecret are their Plots, ſo cunning their Contrivances, ſo politick their Agents, and ſo numerous and reſolute are they in all their enterprizes: and could their ſtratagems prevail, and their devices take effect, how joyful would they be at

ſuch an accompliſhment of their deſigns! What Jubilees would be kept, could they but gain this Kingdom, or could they but once ſeize upon the Vineyards of our *Naboths*, how willingly would they feaſt and glut themſelves with their blood into the bargain! but, God be thanked, that we are as yet out of their power, that we are ſtill under the arms of Gods gracious Providence, that God is pleaſed to call us to humiliation, that ſo he may continue his protection over us, that he is pleaſed to give us notice upon what terms we may expect his further patronage, upon what conditions he will be a Patriot to our Countrey, a Guardian to our Church, a refuge to us all in our greateſt dangers and extremities: and this is the firſt thing obſervable from Gods Call, the great care and concernment he hath for communities of mankind, by calling them to repentance, that ſo they may become fit ſubjects for his Patronage and Protection.

2. A ſecond thing obſervable from Gods Call is his Patience and Forbearance in calling to men before he ſtrike: though their provocations are high, their wickedneſs very hainous, and their ſins ripe for vengeance, yet he frequently defers puniſhment, and gives them timely notice to prevent it by repentance. In the Patriarchal Age before the Flood, though wickedneſs was grown rampant, and the manners of men very corrupt and vitious, God did not preſently pour down the vials of his wrath, but upbraid them firſt for their crimes by *Enoch*, who was an eminent Prophet in thoſe days (a fragment of whoſe Propheſie is ſtill extant in St. *Judes* Epiſtle) and only threaten them with vengeance upon their perſeverance in impenitency. Afterwards when the world grew worſe and worſe, and wickedneſs appeared with a brazen forehead, and violence had covered the face of the earth, when the promiſcuous mixtures of the Children of *Seth* and *Cain* had produced Giants and mighty men, men ſtrong to do evil, and who had as much will as power, ὑβρισταὶ παῖδες,

παῖδες, as *Josephus* calls them, a race of men insolent and ungovernable, scornful and injurious, and who bearing up themselves in the confidence of their own strength despised all justice and equity, and made every thing truckle under their extravagant lusts and appetites, a character which *Lucian* gives the men of this Age, speaking of the time of *Deucalion* (their *Noah*) and the flood, for saith he ὑβρισταὶ κάρτα ἦσαν καὶ ἀθέμιτα ἔργα ἐπράσσον, &c. they being men exceedingly contumelious were guilty of the most enormous and unrighteous actions, violating all oaths and covenants, throwing off kindness and hospitality, and rejecting all supplications and addresses made to them: I say, when mankind was grown to so prodigious a height of impiety, and this infection had spread it self over all parts, and was become so epidemical, that all flesh had corrupted their ways, and scarce any but *Noah* left to keep up the face of a Church, and the profession of Religion: things being come to this pass quickly alarum'd the Divine Justice, and made the world ripe for vengeance; the patience of God was now tired out, and he resolved to make mankind feel the just effects of his incensed severity: but yet in the midst of judgment he remembred mercy, for he tells them, although he would not suffer his patience to be eternally prostituted to the wanton humours of unreasonable and wicked men, and although his spirit would not always strive with them, *disceptabit*, as some Divines render it, dispute, and reason with them, yet that he would bear with them 120 years longer, in order to their Reformation; so loth is God to take an advantage of the sins of men, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come unto repentance. Well, thus it was in the *Antideluvian* Age; and when the world was replenished with new inhabitants, who tempted and provoked the most high God afresh, by such sins and abominations as were of the deepest dye, yet God did not presently open the treasuries Gen. vi. 3.

of vengeance, and ſpeak their ruine, and decree their deſtruction, but ſtill endeavoured to reclaim them by ſeaſonable precautions, and deferred his puniſhment, and waited patiently for their amendment: and to inſtance in *Iſrael*, who was a people as ſignal for their perverſeneſs and rebellion as for the manifold favours they received from the Almighty, under the Parable of the Vineyard, God is pleaſed to give a clear demonſtration of the tender care, and regard he had ſtill for them notwithſtanding their reiterated provocations againſt him, for he made this Vineyard upon a very fruitful Hill, *and he fenced it, and gathered out the ſtones thereof, and planted it with the choiceſt vines*; nay, he digged it, and dunged it, pruned it, and watered it, uſed all the art of cultivation, that might cauſe it to be fruitful, hoping and looking ſtill for ſome productions proportionable to his care and induſtry concerning it; nay, and when it ſtill, year after year, diſappointed his expectations, and brought forth wild Grapes inſtead of Grapes, he was loth to withdraw his kindneſs from it, but continued to dreſs and to manure it, and ſuffered it, like the Figg-tree in the Goſpel, (an Emblem ſtill of the ſame People) further to treſpaſs upon his patience, and would not deſtroy it till there was no hopes of its improvement.

Iſa. v.

Luke xiii. 7, 8, 9.

And to apply this to our ſelves: Hath not God planted as choice a Vineyard in this Nation, and evidenced his Providence and his loving kindneſs towards it by cultivating and preſerving it for many years together in as ample a manner, as he did that amongſt the *Jews*? Hath any Church of the world received greater notices of his favour, more peculiar marks of his affection, or more ſignal teſtimonies of his care on it, than the Church of *England*, of which we profeſs our ſelves to be members? Hath not the Divine Omnipotency interpoſed it ſelf many times miraculouſly for its deliverance, and have we not been as fire-brands pluck'd out of the fire, reſcued from the

moſt

most apparent dangers, snatch'd from the very jaws of death, and the pit of destruction? How frequently have the crafty Foxes of *Geneva* endeavoured to undermine us, and the wild Boars of *Rome* to root us up, and devour us; and yet notwithstanding all their secret Cabals, their slie insinuations, and politick projections, have been disappointed of their hopes, and frustrated in their expectations? As nothing could be more cruelly contrived, than the present Popish Plot, so nothing could be more secretly managed, for as if the Devil and the Jesuits had laid their heads together, and joyned in a league to ruin and dispatch us, nothing could seem more to favour their barbarous enterprize: they had strengthened themselves against us with Foreign interests abroad, they had drawn into the confederacy many of their friends at home, a general Massacre was resolved upon, and most of us to be entombed in the ruins of our Kingdom, whilst they erected triumphant Trophies upon the piles of our murdered and mangled Carkasses: but behold, when they thought themselves most sure, when they were pleasing themselves with the thoughts of a prosperous success in their designs, the Lord in mercy looked upon us by discovering their wicked intentions, by defeating their cursed projects, and bringing to light their mischievous practices and machinations against us; and though in justice, by reason of our manifold offences against him, he might have suffered us to be taken by their wilyness, to be ensnared by their devices, and fall a prey to these malitious and blood-thirsty Boutefeus, yet he hath reprieved us for some longer time from their tyranny and cruel dealings, and is resolved to try what effects this his gracious and merciful providence will have upon us, hoping still that this his patience and forbearance will lead us to repentance.

3. Which brings me to the third Consideration I proposed from the Text, the end of all Gods callings to mankind,

kind, 'tis to work in them a thorough and ſincere humiliation for their tranſgreſſions; *In that day did the Lord God of Hoſt call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldneſs, and to girding with Sackcloth:* now although theſe put together are but the exteriour ſuperficies of repentance, yet they are very good ſigns and ſymptoms of the reality of its performance, and neceſſary in order to its acceptance with God Almighty: a weeping eye and a blubbered cheek, a mournful heart and an afflicted ſpirit, a mortified body and a penitent ſoul, (which I confeſs muſt be indiſpenſably ſuperadded to all the reſt) muſt needs become Sacrifices acceptable to God, and will at any time, no doubt, be very available to avert all preſent danger, to prevent all future puniſhment, or at leaſt to ſecure ſuch ſafety and deliverance, as may be moſt neceſſary, and expedient in the diſmal times of calamity.

1. Such humiliation is very neceſſary to avert all preſent danger: though the hand of vengeance be lifted up, this can hinder the ſtroke, though the ſword of juſtice be drawn, this can hold it back, though the decree be iſſued forth, this may prevent the execution; for ſo ſaith *Jeremiah, At what inſtant I ſpeak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to pluck up, and to pull down, and to deſtroy it: If that nation againſt whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, then I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.* Chap. xviii. 7, 8. I cannot give you a better inſtance than in that of *Nineveh*, God ſends his Prophet to them to aſſure them, that they had but forty days ſpace allowed them either to repent in, or to be deſtroyed: upon this they being immediately ſtruck with the guilt of their own ſins, and the terror of this judgment ſet apart a ſolemn day, without any further delays, for faſting and humiliation, for they put on Sackcloth from the leaſt to the greateſt, and cauſed their very beaſts to faſt as well as themſelves, that ſo, as St. *Gregory* obſerves, the bleating of the Sheep, and lowing of the Cattel, with ſuch other doleful notes might move the Jonah iii. 3.

hearts

hearts of men ſtill to further ſadneſs, which is a great preparative to repentance: and how did they ſpeed upon this? What ſucceſs did their contrition and humiliation meet with, even with the greateſt their hearts could wiſh or deſire, for God altered his purpoſes forthwith concerning this people; the Text ſaith, *He repented of the evil he ſaid he would do unto them, and did it not.* Verſ. 9.

We are all alarum'd at the news of great dangers which hang over our heads, and who is ſo obdurate and inſenſate amongſt us, as not to be affected with the horror of them? I am apt to think that the yoke of *Rome* is as dreadful to us as ever that of *Egypt* was to the people of *Iſrael*, nor did they more tremble at the name of the *Ægyptian* Task-maſters, than we do when we hear of the leagues and frauds, the treacheries and conſpiracies, the ſeditions and inſurrections, the butcheries and maſſacres of the Popiſh Emiſſaries: but will our fears prevent our dangers, or our jealouſies become a bar to our miſeries? Will a bare antipathy againſt them keep us out of their reach, or a few weak ſighs, or inſignificant groans, blow away thoſe ſtorms that threaten both Church and State with inevitable deſtruction? No, the only certain way to be eaſed of our cares, and have our fears abated, is to gain God on our ſides by a timely humiliation, and then we need not fear what the malice of man can do unto us: indeed we are too apt to rely upon a weak arm of fleſh, to confide in the ſtrength and the policy, in the counſel and advice, in the conſultation and reſolutions of thoſe who preſide over us; thus we feed our ſelves with fancies, that if our Senators be but quick and ſagacious in making a thorough diſcovery of theſe wicked incendiaries, if our Magiſtrates be but ſpeedy in the execution of the Laws againſt them, if theſe Traitors be but brought to condign puniſhment for the preſent, and ſevere Laws be enacted for the ſecurity of the King, and the preſervation of the State for future Generations, all things yet

will go well, and we may hope ſtill for glorious days of peace and tranquillity: but then we do not conſider, that when thoſe are diſpatched we have Traitors ſtill amongſt us at our own homes, within our own breaſts, I mean our Sins, which, if not executed likewiſe with no leſs rigour and ſeverity, will open ſtill a door, and let in others from abroad no leſs dreadful and peſtilential than thoſe are, when we think our ſelves moſt ſecure and out of danger. It was a ſmart anſwer which an *Engliſh* Commander gave a *French* Captain in *Normandy*, who asking him, when he thought their Forces, which were called back for *England*, by King *Henry* the ſixth, would return into thoſe parts again; replyed, When their ſins called for them. Yea, 'tis they which are the inlets to all the evil in the world, 'tis they make a gap, open the avenues for our Enemies to come upon us armed, and never believe the Seminaries of *Rome* will deſert this Nation, till by unfeigned repentance we have obſtructed their paſſage, and God, by reaſon of that ſhall think fit not to ſuffer them any longer to torment, and perſecute us: *Humble then your ſelves under the mighty hand of God*, 'tis the beſt way to avert preſent danger.

2. 'Tis as expedient likewiſe to prevent all future puniſhment; Repentance is not only an antidote againſt preſent evils, but a moſt certain defenſative againſt all future calamities: we are very ready to believe, that if this Plot could be but thoroughly ſifted; if the bottom of it could be dived into, the chief Abettors of it diſcovered, the Confederates laid open, the Aſſociates brought to light, the whole Popiſh Faction would be ſo baffled and diſappointed, and their motion for the future watched with ſuch vigilancy, and caution, that they could never be able to do us any more prejudice: But put the caſe this were true, ſuppoſe we could obviate all their deſigns, countermine all their Plots, be privy to all their Cabals, and receive weekly Bills of Intelligence from all their Conſults in *Spain*, *Italy*, *France* or *Flanders*; ſuppoſe

poſe they ſhould ſtill be ſo infatuated in their Counſels, divided in their intereſts, and ſo weakened by their ill ſucceſs, as nothing could come to any maturity which they projected againſt us; yet can we be ſo fooliſh to imagin that God hath no other workmen to make him Darts and Arrows than Papiſts, or no other executioners of his vengeance but Jeſuits? Alas, if our offences require it, there are inſtruments enough beſide to ſerve God in his purpoſes, he can raiſe up wicked Agents within our own Kingdom to ruin and deſtroy us; he can, if he pleaſe, make a Synedrial Claſſis of *Geneva* become as fatal to us as a Conclave at *Rome*, and permit a trumpet of Sedition in order to our downfall to be blown as loud out of a Fanatick Conventicle, as a Jeſuits Cloyſter: he can crumble us into Factions and Diviſions amongſt our ſelves, and make every Schiſmatical Sect amongſt us become his rod and ſcourge to chaſtiſe our wickedneſs and folly: nay, he need not go ſo far for executioners to diſpatch us, for he can raiſe up within our own bowels Miniſters of his wrath, as he ſerved *Antiochus* and *Herod*, to put a period to our lives and ſins together: and nothing but a ſerious and ſincere Repentance, though perhaps we do eſcape now, can give us any aſſurance that we ſhall not fall, for the future, by one or other of thoſe direful Aſſaſſinates.

'Tis obſervable in all the States and Kingdoms of the world, as in *Ægypt*, *Babylon*, *Jewry*, &c. whom God enforced to drink the dreadful cup of his fury, that their final impenitency was the cauſe of their deſtruction, and they might perhaps yet have flouriſhed and been in vogue in the world, had not their ſins intercepted the Divine Favour, and haſtened their ruin. There is nothing can make a Nation firm and durable, laſting and permanent, ſettle it upon ſuch foundations, as that when the rain deſcends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, they ſhall not be able to ſhake it, but Repentance alone, which will ſo fortifie and ſtrengthen it, that the gates of Hell

ſhall not be able to prevail againſt it: upon which account, if we would for ever promote the univerſal happineſs of out Nation, prevent all future attempts and deſigns of its Enemies againſt it, and eſtabliſh it upon ſuch ſolid and laſting foundations, as no ſhocks of the moſt puiſſant aſſailants ſhall be able to demoliſh it, let us anſwer Gods Call, and fall to weeping and mourning.

3. By which means, I dare aſſure you, that if we could not avert preſent danger, nor prevent future puniſhment, yet we may thirdly, without all peradventure, deliver our own ſouls; yea, this is the comfort that the truly penitent man receives, though Gods judgment fly abroad to the terror of the wicked, though the ſtorms and billows of affliction do ariſe, yet either under the ſhadow of his wings will hide him, until thoſe calamities be overpaſt, or elſe with the temptation make a way to eſcape, that he may be able to bear it: if the old Dragon caſt out a flame of fire to deſtroy the Church, if the Clouds of perſecution fall in ſhowers upon the penitent mans head, yet behold, *When he paſſeth through the water, God will be with him, and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow him, when he walks through the fire, he ſhall not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon him:* nay, God hath decreed to ſet a mark upon his head, that ſo he may eſcape the fury of the deſtroyer; *Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that ſigh, and that cry for all the abominations, that are done in the midſt of her; and to the others he ſaid, Go ye after him through the city, and ſmite, let not your eye ſpare, neither have pity, ſlay utterly both old and young, both maids and little children, and women, but come not near any man upon whom is the mark.* You ſee then upon terms, you may hope for ſafety in the gloomy days of Calamity; if your returns be proportionable to Gods gracious calls, if you exerciſe all the acts of true penance and contrition, though your Nation ſhould be conſumed in the day of the Lords anger, yet your repentance ſhall render you ſo grateful.

Pſal. lvii. 1.

1 Cor. x. 13.

Iſa. xliii. 2.

Ezek. ix. 4, 5.

grateful a Sacrifice to him, as will cauſe him, not only to accept your perſons, but to ſecure and protect them, to be your ſhield and buckler, your high tower and defence in the greateſt extremities.

And now this being the deſign of Gods gracious call to *Iſrael*, one would be apt to think that ſuch endearing methods of kindneſs ſhould have met with ſome ſuitable returns of duty, that ſuch cords of love ſhould have drawn the *Jews* to a compliance with Gods deſires, and ſuch *Philtrum*'s of mercy charm'd them into good nature, and a complaiſant obedience; nay, one would believe it almoſt impoſſible for intelligent beings, who had but any ſpark left of the ſenſitive part of humanity, not to be armed againſt future danger upon ſuch fair premonitions, and be perſwaded from thence to provide for their own ſafety, and conſult their own ſecurity, much leſs to be guilty of ſuch oſcitancy and ſupineneſs, ſuch obduracy and perverſeneſs, as neither to be won by love nor awed by fear, but to ſet up themſelves in oppoſition to God, their own ways in contradiſtinction to his, and reſolve, that becauſe God will have one thing, they will be ſure to act clear contrary to the Divine Pleaſure: and yet this was the caſe of the *Jews* in the Text, which brings me to the ſecond obſervable.

II. To conſider their horrible Ingratitude towards God, who as it were, in defiance to his Almighty hand, called to joy and gladneſs, when God thought it moſt neceſſary to call to weeping and mourning; to ſlaying ſheep, and killing oxen, when God thought faſting and abſtinence to be moſt proper for them; nay, to eating and drinking, even downright luxury and profaneneſs, when God expected, by a mortified body and a penitent ſoul, to have received the earneſt from them of a thorough Reformation.

From which unworthy procedure of this people towards God, there will three things again fall under conſideration.

1. The base Nature and disingenuous Temper of the *Jews*, thus boldly to thwart God in all his gracious designs towards them.

2. Their carnal Security which made them deaf to the loudest Calls, and regardless of all such things which were of the greatest moment and concernment to them.

3. Their prodigious Luxury and Voluptuousness, which laid their consciences asleep, and made them incredulous, hard-hearted and remorseless, unfit to relent at any thing, which was threatned against them, or to receive any Divine favour or kindness that was offered them.

1. I shall consider the disingenuous Temper, and base Nature of the *Jews*, thus to thwart God Almighty in the most gracious designs, and purposes concerning them. 'Tis the opinion of some Divines, that one reason why God was pleased to make choice of the *Jews*, as a peculiar people, and select them from all the rest of the world beside, was indeed out of meer pity and compassion towards them, because he knew they were a sort of men of the most obstinate, refractory and unmanageable temper beyond all other Nations throughout the Universe, and therefore stood most in need of it: and indeed had they not been of so untractable a disposition, and of a mold quite differing from all the race of mankind beside, 'tis hardly supposeable, that under such happy circumstances, as God was pleased to place them, they could ever have miscarried, and become at last the off-scouring and the contempt of the world, had not their own unparallel'd ingratitude opened a way for their ruin, and their incorrigibelness under all means exposed them to such misfortunes; and really, though they appeared in the shapes of men, yet that they seem'd to be devested of the common sentiments and principles of humanity, will be too apparent to any one, who considers, that the most signal marks of the Divine Care and Providence left no more footsteps, nor made any more impressions upon

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their minds and consciences, than if they had been nothing elsebut meer stocks and stones, Statues of Brass, or Pillars of Marble. Who would not be perswaded, that in the age of miracles, when God had delivered *Israel* out of the hand of the *Ægyptians* by a mighty hand, and an out-stretched arm, by causing the *Red Sea* to be a Fortress to them, and a Grave to their enemies; this being an everlasting monument of Gods peculiar respect and regard to them, would not be likewise as lasting a *memento* of duty and obedience to them and their Posterity to all succeeding Generations? And yet no sooner is the Song of praise for that deliverance out of their mouths, but they fall a murmuring and repining at the Author of it, as if he who had divided the Sea for their sakes, could not as well open the treasuries of Heaven, or soften the iron ribs of rocks to supply their exigencies; and when this was done too by miracle, and God had smote the rocks, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed, *When he commanded the clouds from above, and opened the door of Heaven, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of Heaven*; yet for all this they sinned still, and the next news we hear of them, is, that they chose to worship a molten Calf before this God who had done so great things for them; by this means involving themselves in the grievous guilt of Idolatry, and provoking God to anger by such extravagant inventions: I might give other instances to make good the Psalmists character of them, *that they were a stubborn and rebellious generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God*, but the Text doth it so fully, that I need not go further; for that when God appears in his bloody robes of vengeance, and shakes the sword of Justice over them, they nevertheless should take so little notice of it as not to abate one inch of their jollity, but continue as merry and frolicksom, as if all was well, is an argument of the most perverse incorrigible Humour in the world.

Psal. lxxviii. 23, 24, 25.

Psal. cvi. 19.

Psal. lxxviii. 8.

And

And I wish we be not found guilty of as base and unworthy requitals: we are all mightily surprized at the rumour and noise of a bloody Plot against us, and this heightens our fears, and increaseth our jealousies: but is our deportment suitable to such dreadful apprehensions, or do we behave our selves as men, whose present fear of danger is the genuine issue of the heart, and not barely of the tongue? doth the dreadfulness of such a judgment cause any alterations in our persons, becloud our countenances with sorrow, bedew our cheeks with tears, or affect our hearts with such passionate regrets, as the ruin of our State, the subversion of our Church, and the horror of death or slavery may justly call for at all our hands?

Alas, is not a quite contrary behaviour more discernible amongst us, and doth not our uninterrupted jollity, our unseasonable mirth, our excessive joy and gladness under all these circumstances speak our fears to be but counterfeit, or our jealousies superficial, and that whatever we may profess, we are not really concern'd for the good and interest of our Countrey? Is it an argument of any real care or sincere affection in that Son, who when his Parents shall lie sick, and are upon the very confines of Death and the Grave, shall follow his sports, and indulge himself in pleasure, shall frolick and carouze it, and be as brisk and bonny as if they were well and out of all fear of danger? And when the King, who is *Pater patriæ*, the Father of our Countrey, when the Church, who is our Mother, when our Laws and Liberties seem all to lye at the stake, and are in the most apparent and imminent danger imaginable, can it be fitting or decorous for us to be guilty of such things? Believe it, that is one way to force God to laugh and mock too, and then our laughter may chance to end in the most dismal of all sorrows, even in weeping to all eternity, and in wailing and in gnashing of teeth. Let us take heed then that this be not the result of our mad-brain'd jollity, but let us endeavour to prevent

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it by mourning both for our own and the ſins of the Nation; if we cannot redreſs them, yet let us heartily bewail the miſchiefs which we fear, and if the Church muſt periſh, at leaſt give her Funeral Rites, and if we cannot quench her flames, bedew her aſhes with our tears: thus we ſhall to good purpoſes invert the *Jewiſh* prepoſterous method, for which they are juſtly ſtigmatized, who, when God called to weeping and mourning, called aloud to joy and gladneſs, which argued the Baſeneſs and Perverſeneſs of their nature: and that is the firſt.

2. The ſecond thing obſervable from hence, in the *Jews*, is their carnal Security, who were utterly unconcerned at all Gods Calls, and regardleſs of all ſuch things as were of greateſt conſequence and importance, and thinking themſelves out of danger, when deſtruction was at the door, call to joy and gladneſs, ſlaying oxen, and killing ſheep, &c. It hath been a ſad fate which hath attended many people, to be infatuated with the greateſt hopes of ſafety, and promiſe themſelves the greateſt meaſures of tranquillity, when deſtruction hath been coming upon them like an armed man: it ſeems the *Jews* had ſtill ſo great confidence in Gods favour, that they thought the moſt daring provocations could not poſſibly intercept it, and therefore ſtill cryed Peace, Peace, when the dangers were moſt apparent, and their ruin juſt at hand: but many Ages before them the ſpirit of ſecurity had ſo ſeized the hearts of men, that nothing could remove thoſe *Torpor*'s which had benum'd them, and notwithſtanding the fearful menaces, and thunderclaps that were ſent to awaken their lethargical conſciences, yet they went on in their old habituated courſes of ſin, being no more concerned at Gods voice, though it breathed out ſuch ſevere threatnings, than if it had approached them with all the calmneſs imaginable, *for they eat, they drank, they married wives, and were given in marriage.* Luke xvii. 27. Let *Noah*, the Preacher of righteouſneſs, ſay what he would

to the contrary, until the very day that *Noah* entred into the Ark, *and the flood came and wasted away all their filthy pollutions:* And so again in the days of *Lot*, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, and when righteous *Lot* went to some of his friends to forewarn them of the evil which was coming upon them, his words seem'd unto them like some idle story or feigned Romance, and they would give no credence to the message he delivered, till they felt the flames about their ears, and themselves perishing in the ruins of their City.

Vers. 28.

Gen. xix. 14.

And should we calculate the number of such like persons amongst us, I am afraid we should find so large a roll of them, as might justly induce us to believe that their great Security is too fatal a Prognostick of our approaching Destruction: for some there are, who, unless they saw with their eyes the Popes Standard set up in *England*, and the Jesuits washing their hands in the reaking blood of those who are its Natives, will not believe that those Religious Persons by any means can be such sanguinary and cruel Butchers, notwithstanding the killing of Hereticks (and we know whom they are pleased to asperse with that title) is a Doctrine taught in their Schools, justified by their practices, and maintained in their writings, as might be made appear from *Ribadeneira*, *Becanus*, *Windeck*, *Stapleton*, and the rest of that lawless herd of *Ignatian Casuists:* nay, is a Doctrine whose bloodiness they can neither be able to conceal, nor wash off from their Church, whilst the Triumphant Oration of Pope *Sixtus* the fifth continues extant in the world, which he made to his Cardinals in the Consistory at *Rome*, upon the barbarous Assassination of *Henry* the third of *France*, after he was stabbed to death by *Clement* the *Dominican Fryar.*

But others there are, who though they are persuaded, that if indeed the power of the *Jesuits* was as extensive

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as their malice, and their intereſt as ſtrong as they could wiſh it were in *England*, both King and People might then ſuffer indeed, as the Proteſtants in *France* and in *Ireland* have done before them; but it being next to an impoſſibility for them ever to effect what we imagine they deſign, their caballs being now ſo narrowly watched, their ſecrecies diſcloſed, their intereſts weakned, and their own parties many times countermining their projects, beſides the grand and moſt certain oppoſition they would be apt to meet withall from the greateſt part of this Nation, who 'tis to be hoped will never more be reconciled to their monſtrous Doctrines and Tenents. Theſe things being conſidered, and they upon theſe grounds having ſuch unlikely hopes of ſucceſs, why men ſhould afflict themſelves with the terror of them, or dread their power, or be uneaſie, and concerned at their wild and extravagant attempts, argues too great levity and imprudence in them that do it, and therefore they reſolve, as for their own parts, let the Pope do his worſt, to conſult ſtill their own eaſe, and gratifie their own humours, and follow their own ways, and like the men of *Laiſh* Judg. xviii. 7. live careleſs, and remiſs under all the revolutions, that may happen in the Kingdom. To ſuch men I anſwer, that ſuch Security is the readieſt inlet to the myſtery of Jeſuitiſm, for ſuppoſing that every body was as ſupine and careleſs as they, who would be left to ſearch into the intrigues, to obviate the deſigns, or to countermine the plots of theſe politick adverſaries? And then indeed would they triumph over our careleſneſs and ſecurity, and we ſhould as eaſily fall into their hands as they could deſire, and nothing could prevent this, but omnipotency it ſelf; but why God ſhould take care of them, who are ſo unwilling to take care of themſelves, why God ſhould not ſuffer them to make uſe of ſuch advantages as we afford them, but interpoſe his providence betwixt our Security and Ruine, is no way to be anſwered, unleſs we

will admit God to be the Patron of the ſlothful, or a Protector of thoſe who yet by their ſupinity fling themſelves out of the covert of his moſt ſacred Wings; ſo that if upon ſuch terms as theſe are men will promiſe themſelves ſafety, they are farther from it than they ſuppoſe or imagine; for if a man will ſtill compoſe himſelf to ſleep, when the floods are ruſhing in upon him, he muſt needs periſh by his fooliſh ſecurity, and if, when dangers are impendent, men will feed themſelves with hopes of eſcaping, and avoiding them, and yet uſe no means in order to prevent them, and though God calls to them, will not ſtep one inch out of the way, not part with one ſin, not relinquiſh one luſt, not abandon the leaſt pleaſure, though they are ſure to gain thereby Gods favour and protection, no wonder he at laſt ſuffers them to fall by their folly, and to periſh in thoſe calamities of which they thought themſelves moſt ſecure; this was the *Jewiſh* crime, for which God did juſtly upbraid, and puniſh them, and is a ſecond aggravation of their Ingratitude towards him.

3. The third thing to be taken notice of, was the inſufferable height of Voluptuouſneſs and Luxury to which they were arrived: the moſt powerful calls, the moſt amazing judgments, the moſt awakening menaces could not reclaim them from ſuch abominations, but being reſolved to take their fill of pleaſure before God cut them off, in defiance of him they give their wills the full ſwing, indulge themſelves in all manner of ſenſuality, crying out in the *Epicurean* dialect, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall die.*

But he that conſiders how far the doctrine of *Epicurus* hath prevailed in this Age, how Gods Judgments, which have been very dreadful and aſtoniſhing amongſt us, have wrought clear contrary effects, to what they were deſigned, and having waſted the Seeds of natural Piety in us, have erected Academies of downright Atheiſm,

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and Voluptuouſneſs in the room, may juſtly conclude, that as we have out-vyed all the Jewiſh race of ſinners, ſo ought we likewiſe at laſt to tranſcend them in our puniſhments. Look we but upon the practices and manners of this Nation, and we ſhall find this truth too ſadly exemplified, that the generality of men look upon themſelves, no otherwiſe than as creatures ſent into the world, as the Leviathan into the deep, to take his full career of paſtime and pleaſure in it; that they make it their buſineſs firſt to excite and cloy the fleſh, to ſpur it on to riots even beyond its own propenſions, by which means the year becomes but one mad Carnival, and all the Elements are muſtered up, and yet (*nec Aer, nec Aqua, nec Terra ſufficit*) all are not enough to careſs and ſatisfie their craving appetites:

Aude aliquid brevibus Gyaris & carcere dignum,
Si vis eſſe aliquid——

To be aggrandized for wickedneſs was not only the great ambition of many *Romans* in *Juvenal*'s days, but is the deſire and chief aim of too many amongſt us, and he is reputed a man of excellent parts, a perſon of a very refined and delectable converſation, who dares venture to pull down the pale, or lay open the incloſures of Religion by the helliſh art of ſcoffing, or prophane jeſting at it: nay are there not ſome who are ſo bold as to ungod the world, and out-hector the devil, and reduce both to nothing, but imaginary phantaſms? Who endeavour to make Hell no more than ſome painted fire, and a future ſtate paſs for an impoſture of the Prieſt, and level all diſcourſes concerning it with the poetical deſcription of the *Fairy-Land!* And in theſe circumſtances no wonder, that the evil communications of ſuch men corrupt all good manners, no wonder that the empire of debauchery is ſo large, and that iniquity goes down with ſo great

ſatisfaction and delight, no wonder, that when men are willing to imbibe ſuch principles, their hearts and foreheads grow as hard as braſs, bluſh not, nor are aſhamed of the moſt filthy abominations, but publiſh their ſin like *Sodom*, and glory in ſuch things as have the greateſt turpitude and deformity: but if this deſperate condition was the moſt certain Symptom of the *Jewiſh* deſolation: if the poor *Britains* of this Nation were then invaded by the *Saxons*, when they were grown to ſuch a height of luxury and prophaneneſs, that as *Gildas* ſaith, they were not only ſtrangers to Religion themſelves, but hated thoſe very perſons who had any ſenſe of it amongſt them; then may we juſtly dread the ſame fate will attend us, that our Atheiſm and Licentiouſneſs, our Pride and Voluptuouſneſs, will open a door, either for the Papiſts, or ſome other executioners of Gods vengeance to come in upon us, and deſtroy us.

Jerem. vi. 15.

And this we may be convinced of to our eternal ſorrow and confuſion, if we conſider Gods manner of proceeding againſt all obſtinate and incorrigible ſinners, which brings me to the third Obſervable.

III. The aſtoniſhing Reſolution of God toward the *Jews* upon their not hearkening to, nor obſerving his gracious Call, namely, to devote them to the moſt bitter Plague of Death it ſelf: *And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of Hoſts, ſurely this iniquity ſhall not be purged from you till ye die, ſaith the Lord God of Hoſts.*

By which we may learn that the mercies of God, when once they are abuſed, are always converted into the moſt direful plagues and puniſhments: God is ſaid in Scripture to have two rods, a rod of men, and a rod of iron, if the one cannot work upon our ſtony hearts, he will break them with the other; if men will not be bettered with the bread of affliction, he will feed them with wormwood: though, 'tis true, God hath proclaimed himſelf merciful and long-ſuffering, yet he adds too, that he will by no means

Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

means clear the guilty; though he be φιλάνθρωπος, a compassionate lover of all mankind, and endeavours to draw them to him with the cords of love, yet if this will not do, he will chastise them with Scorpions: he punisheth first gently, to try if that will work a reformation amongst sinners, but if such mild punishments avail nothing, he then pours down upon them the utmost dregs of his fury: when they once come to such a pitch of insolency, as even with the Gigantick race of Rebels of old, θεομαχεῖν, to fight against Gods Sacred Majesty, he then makes their arrows recoil back upon their own heads: 'Tis observable, that before the fatal judgment fell upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, God sent some smaller punishments by the Invasion of the Eastern Kings, who came against them, and discomfited them; and thus he dealt with the *Jews* before their final Captivity, he afforded them smaller instances of his displeasure, to tell us, that if little notices prove insignificant amongst us, greater marks of his fury shall leave deeper impressions on us; hence God is said to have treasuries of judgments, that will never be exhausted whilst men prove so expensive in their sins. Gen. xiv. 10.

Now that this way of proceeding is very just and equitable towards all incorrigible sinners will appear very evident upon these accounts.

First, Because there is no other way to deal with such men but to make them the most formidable examples of his Justice; when men arrive at so great a degeneracy, they are past all sense, and there is no hopes of recovery, they are altogether dead in trespasses and sins, and their consciences are so obdurate; so frozen and so benumm'd that there is nothing can awaken, soften or mollifie them, no other means left to satisfie the offended justice of God but utter excision and desolation: nay, there is no other way to deter others from such habituated courses of sinning, as will in time induce such fearful Lethargies upon the soul, than by inflicting the most heavy hand, and the severest

severest rod upon the back of such offenders, nothing will sooner bring men to a sense of their follies, and the practice of true Religion and substantial godliness, than such terrible marks of the Divine vengeance, for when
Isaiah xxvi. 9. Gods judgments are so visible in the earth the inhabitants thereof *will learn righteousness.*

Secondly, there is no other way to give any tolerable satisfaction to the abused mercy of God, but by such severe proceedings: the greater the mercy, the greater is Gods resentment of it, when abused, and consequently the greater must be the punishment, and the more smart the retribution for the abuse of it: if God do multiply his blessings upon men, and they debauch them to the worst ends, what compensation can he receive for the violation of such kindness, but by making them the utmost objects of his fury, who spurned at all the bowels and the tenders of mercy? If a City should fall into open rebellion against its King, and after all the gracious overtures of Peace and Reconciliation, still hold out against him, and deny him admission till his Sword forced the way through; would not this so far incense his abused patience and goodness, and make him to resolve upon its utter desolation? And when we still continue our provocations against God, notwithstanding all the gracious terms and conditions he hath proposed to us, will not his loving-kindness, which is tired out, convert it self into the hottest flames of indignation to revenge the injury? Remember again the Parable of the Vineyard when God saw that after all his care, and his providence over it, it was not bettered by his pruning, and brought forth nothing but wild Grapes, behold what
Isaiah v. 5, 6. severe things he threatens against it; *I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down; and I will lay it waste, it shall not be pruned, nor digged, but there shall come up Briars and Thorns: I will also command the clouds, that they*

they rain no rain upon it. Believe it, there is no fury so extreme, as that which is bottomed upon repelled and irritated love; and God is then always moved to the higheſt wrath, when men take courage to ſin, becauſe grace doth abound.

3. But laſtly, ſuch wilful wickedneſs always enhanſeth the guilt, and haſteneth the puniſhment. Thus when the Jews had beyond meaſure incenſed God Almighty by continual provocations, the judgments which fell upon them were proportionate to their offences, and it would make ones heart ake to read the Hiſtory of their Times, when in the ſpace of leſs than ſeven years there periſhed of the Jews, at home and abroad, both in their Civil and Foreign Wars (as *Lipſius* hath computed the number) no leſs than *duodecies centena & quadraginta millia*, twelve hundred and forty thouſand men, to fulfil the tenor of thoſe threatnings which had ſo frequently been iſſued out by their Prophets againſt that Nation. *De Conſtantia lib. 2. cap. 21.*

And now ſince the mercies have been as great which God hath vouchſafed to us, and our incorrigibleneſs as remarkable under the greateſt of them, what remains for us, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation to devour all Gods adverſaries? What can we ſay for our ſelves, that God ſhould not ſuffer us to fall into their hands whom we moſt fear; ſince we have trampled upon his goodneſs, whom we have moſt reaſon to love? It is but juſt with God to puniſh one ſin by another, and ſo fit us for deſtruction by the permiſſion of it, to change our indifferency in Religion into a blind Zeal, and ſuperſtitious practice of it; our open Prophaneneſs into profeſſed Idolatry; our contempt of Order and Diſcipline into rigorous Cenſures and a bloody Inquiſition; our deſpiſing of Dominion and ſpeaking evil of Dignities, into a Yoke of Tyranny and Romiſh Uſurpations. And I know not what can any way avert the one, but our hearty and ſincere reſolutions to retract and utterly for-

ſake the other, and with proſtrate bodies and contrite ſouls unanimouſly to implore the divine mercy in that excellent Form of Prayer which our Church affords us for this occaſion.

GLORIOUS and gratious God, whoſe judgments againſt obſtinate offenders are moſt ſevere and terrible, but thy mercies infinite to all, that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto thee: We ſinful people of this Land do acknowledg before thee, to thy glory, and our own ſhame, that never any Nation had more experience of thy goodneſs, nor yet did ever any more unthankfully abuſe it: when thou gaveſt us great and long proſperity, we fed our ſelves to the full, waxed fat, and kicked againſt thee: when thou threweſt us into horrid confuſions, from which we ſaw then little hopes of ariſing, even in the time of that diſtreſs did we treſpaſs yet more againſt thee: when by miracles of mercy thou hadſt turned our captivities, we ſoon returned to folly, to our vomit, and to our wallowing in our former, or greater filthineſs. Even while thou haſt of late appeared for us, by diſcovering the Plots and Contrivances of our implacable enemies of the Romiſh Faction, we have been in the mean time by our ſins fighting againſt Heaven, and againſt thee. And now we are no more worthy to be called either thy ſons or thy ſervants, whom neither thy fear hath driven, nor thy goodneſs led to repentance. In mercy awaken our drowſie conſciences, and ſubdue our hard hearts into deep contrition. Pardon the many great offences of us thy ſervants, and the crying ſins of the whole Nation. Remove the evils we now lie under. Avert the judgments which we juſtly fear, becauſe we moſt juſtly deſerve. Diſcover more and more the ſnares of death, and Popiſh treachery, and let us never fall into the hands of thoſe men, whoſe mercies are cruel. Unite all our hearts in the profeſſion of the true Religion, which thine own right hand hath planted amongſt us, and in a holy converſation anſwerable thereto. Pour out thine abundant bleſſings upon our

gracious

gracious King, and his great Council the present Parliament, Keep him as the apple of thine eye, hide him under the shadow of thy wings. Inform his Princes after thy will, and teach his Senators wisdom: And grant that all their counsels, resolutions and endeavours may tend to, and end in the glory of thy great Name, the preservation of the Church and true Religion amongst us, and the security, peace, and prosperity of these Kingdoms. All which we humbly beg in the Name, and through the Mediation of Jesus Christ thy Son, our Saviour. Amen.

FINIS.